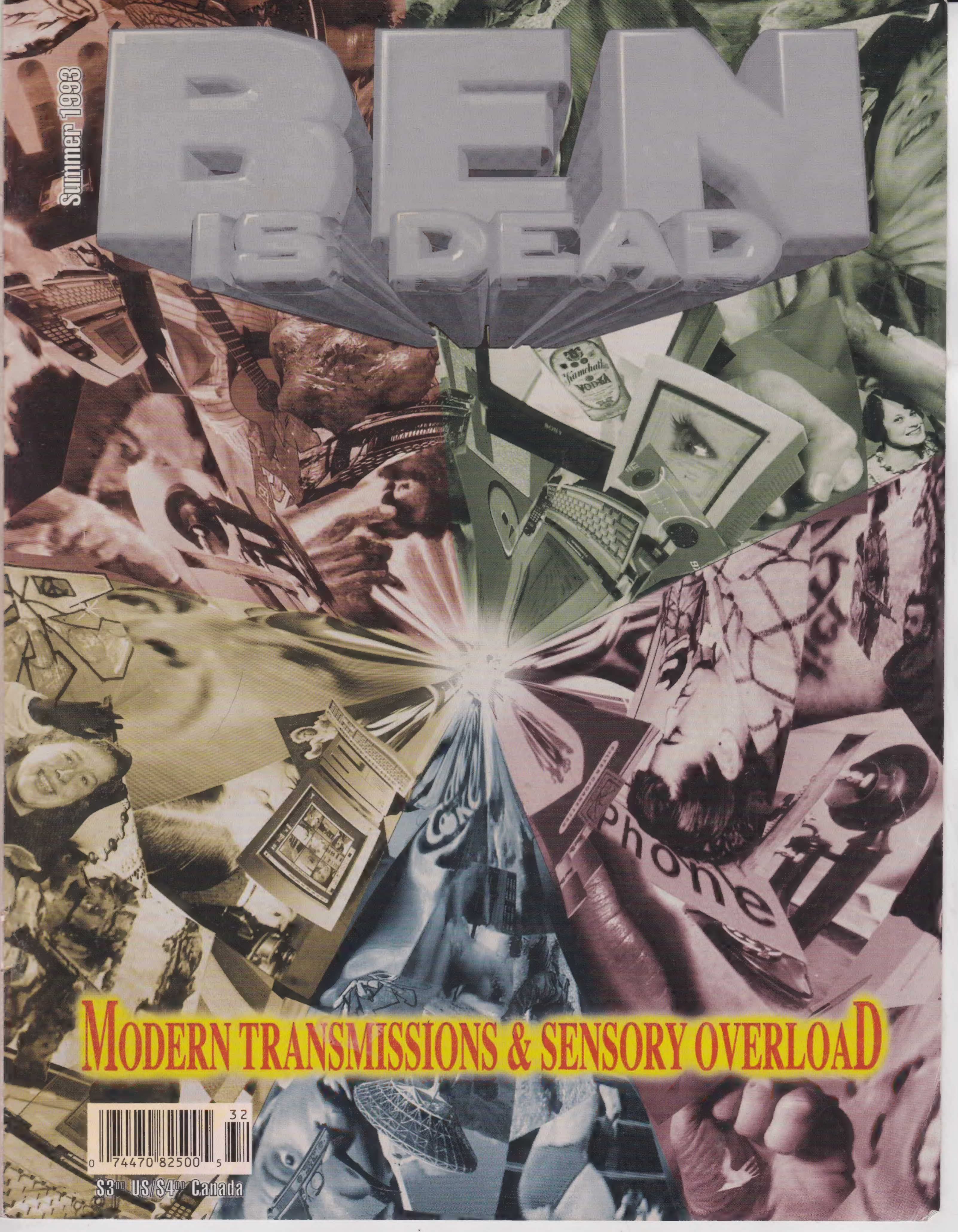
Summer 1993

BEN IS DEAD



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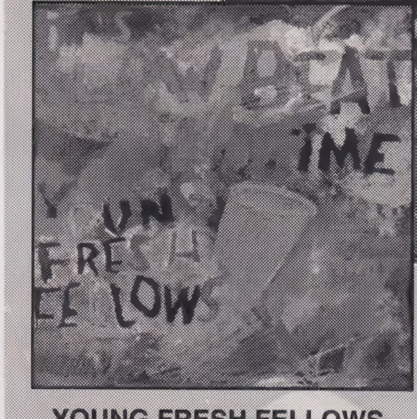

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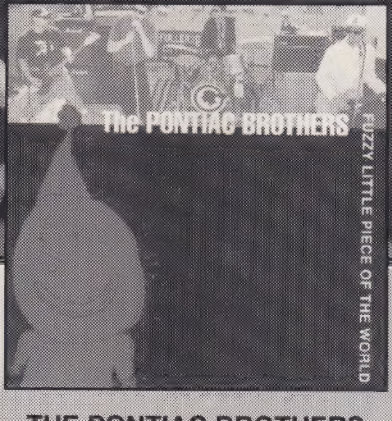

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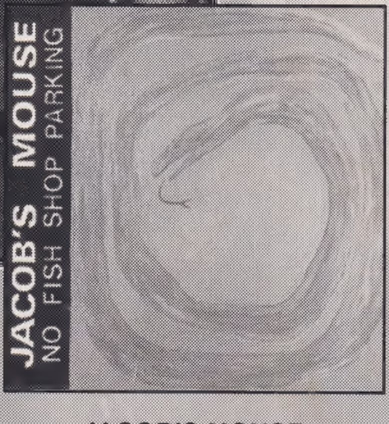

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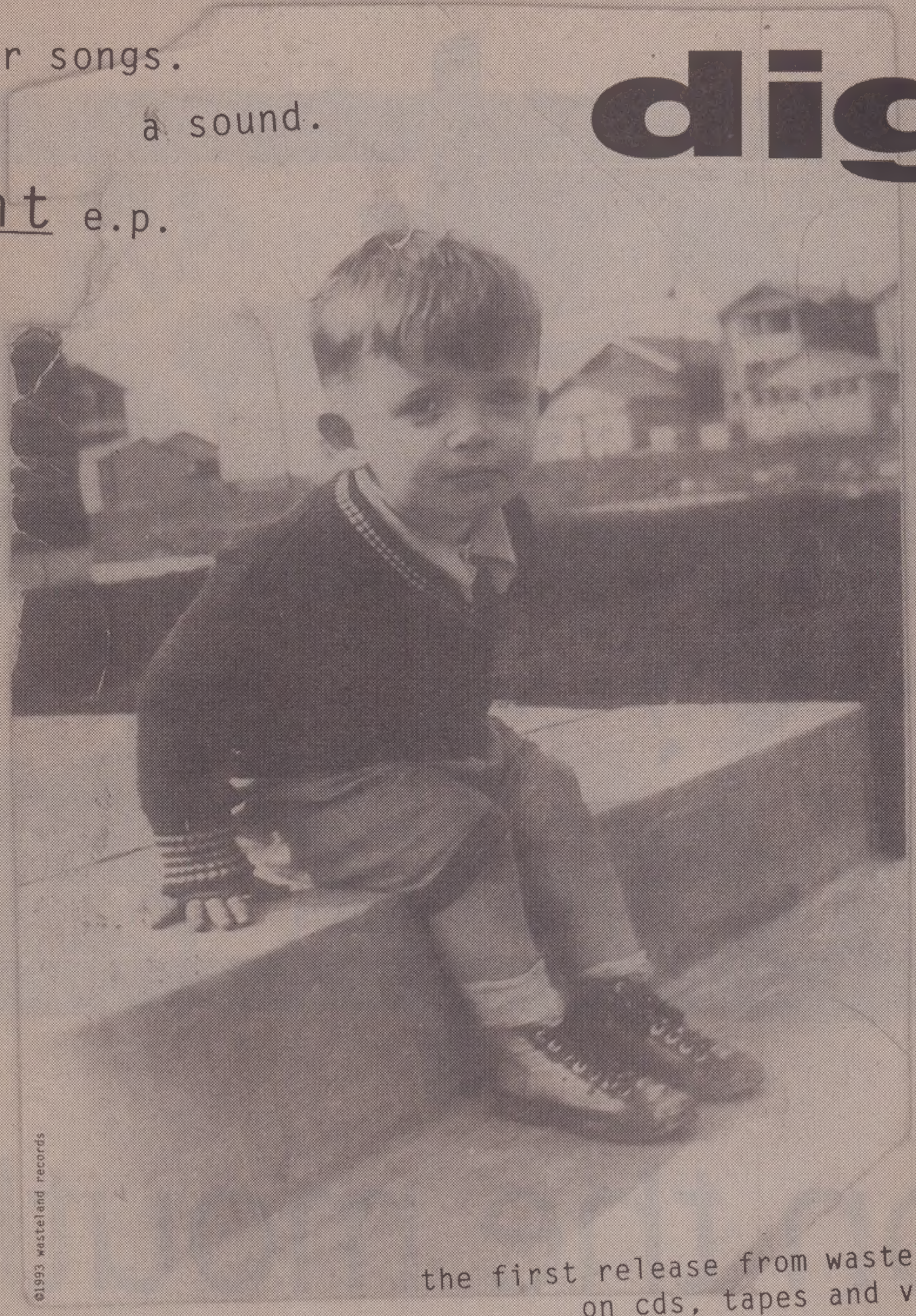

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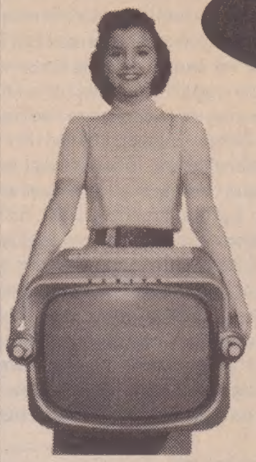
INSIDE



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Enquiring Minds Want to Know: Electronic gadgetry has rendered the established media susceptible to viral contamination by the individual... if you don't believe this, just ask Amy Fisher - or read this interview with author Douglas Rushkoff.

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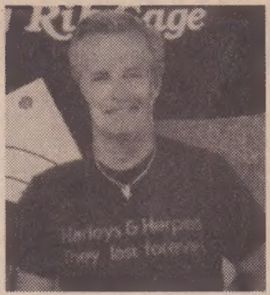

Get It Off Your Chest: Tired of the politically-correct climate of the '90s? Al Cacophony discovers nothing is sacred in t-shirt lexicology of the extreme right.

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Simon says "Threesome": Kerin's teen dreams become an intoxicated reality when she and Darby join Duran Duran for an afternoon of expensive beer drinking and stimulating conversation about toothpicks, anacondas, and sex.

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Music for the Masses?: With music seminars popping up like zits, is the art of noise eclipsed by the art of the deal? Kerin penetrates the cosmetically independent convention scene to determine if it's blemish-free, or suffering from a bad complexion.

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Sex
CYBERSEX

Log on: Cracker Ethan Port and editors of the new wave of socio-techno magazines engage in wild palmistry through e-mail sessions regarding the "cyberserk" phenomenon and its future.

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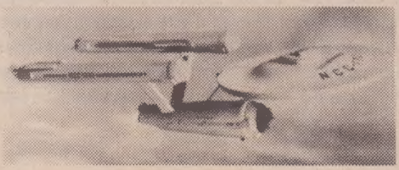

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Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense -Gertrude Stein

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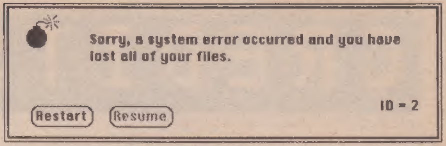
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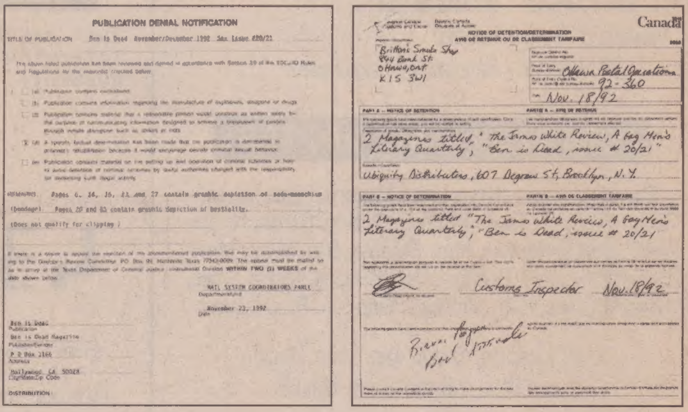
THE BOMB: A SCARY, BUT FAMILIAR SIGHT AT BID

I have an obsessive nature. The only way I get things done is by becoming engulfed in them. It's like a bad rave song that repeats the same noise over and over again, boom boom boom into your skull 'til it just breaks you up – you can't think. I violently throw myself into a spinning cauldron of some idea and get beaten and thrashed about until I have to dissect the whole thing from the inside and somehow find my way out. That's the reason these themes [for each BID issue] work so well. Because I love getting obsessed with things. Well, maybe I don't love it, but that's just the way I am so I'm learning to at least live with myself.

I can't be a drug user anymore because I only knew how to be a drug abuser. I couldn't do one line of something, I'd have to do it all until there was no more left to do – and then pick the specks from the carpet and do those. I'd have to do speed until I got to the point that I'd done so much I'd have to sleep with my eyes open. Up for days straight, too fucked up to take a shower, it'd hurt too much to eat. I'd wallow in it. I thought if I was ever able to give speed up it would be when I got to a point where I'd done so much I was on the brink of death and only that would snap me out of it – so that was my direction. Each time I'd go as far as I could. That's how I did drugs.

I can't be a shoplifter anymore because I would have to shoplift everyday, at almost every store I went into. Much of the time, then, it was out of necessity – items I'd steal would often be food. But don't get me wrong, when you're too broke to buy food you're usually too broke to buy pleasure too; shoplifting was my fun. It became comparable to drugs because I would get high off it and after I'd come off the high I'd need to do it again. That minute when you're walking through the store's doors, dripping in sweat and you're shaking so much you can barely walk, and you swear, swear, swear to a god you don't believe in that if you don't get caught you'll never steal anything ever again. Getting arrested wasn't even enough to deter my shoplifting habit. It was bigger than that. Getting caught just made me feel like a scummy person because that's exactly how they treat you. My self-esteem would dip just low enough to need to get high off shoplifting – again – once I got my nerves calmed down. I'm sorta proud to say that after a life of almost endless crime I was inspired by the LA Riots to never shoplift again. I have to wonder where I'd be today if those riots didn't occur. But, that obsessive energy is still there.

If I'm not obsessed by something I just lie around all day in a sort of comatose state. I honestly can't move sometimes; I don't know where I'm going. I have to get to these stages in order to sort out my direction, and to remind myself that if I'm not moving forward I'm not accomplishing anything.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TITLE OF PUBLICATION Ben Is Dead November/December 1992 Sex Issue #20/21

REMARKS: Pages 6, 14, 15, 21 and 27 contain graphic depiction of sado-masochism (bondage). Pages 20 and 83 contain graphic depiction of bestiality.

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THE SEX ISSUE: BANNED FROM PRISONS AND CANADA.

So six months ago, right after we completed the Sex issue, I had what I thought was a really good idea to help get our minds off the magazine work and give us a small creative vacation. To take this inside joke, "Hating Brenda", and go all the way with it. To actually put everything together into a newsletter. It wasn't as if I was really obsessed with Brenda, you know, it was just sort of a play obsession – designed to last a couple of weeks tops. Well, it turned out to be the worst "vacation package" I could ever imagine putting together. The *I Hate Brenda Newsletter* [we only printed one issue of the damn thing] came out in December and Kerin's life and mine were to be temporarily transformed into an even worse hell-on-earth than we'd ever experienced with *Ben Is Dead*. For the past *five months* we've been living with this. For about two months straight we did up to ten interviews a day in person and over the phone with press from all over the fucking world. The phone was growing out of my ear. I dreamed of a cordless phone headset – imagining I could be the Madonna of the office scene. Actually, it's hard to stomach that I related with mainstream folks out there, and it happened to be on a topic as inane as "Brenda hating". What could we do but go with it? In one sense the press was just what we needed, since we had just made the difficult decision to sell BID in Southern California, (as we do throughout the US), instead of giving it away free, while keeping our circulation 16,000. We couldn't turn away the opportunity to use "Brenda" to garnish attention for BID. We made a rule not to do any Brenda interviews unless they would talk about Ben as well. Unfortunately this thing that could have made us all rich quick wasn't set up properly to make money. I had to hire people to deal with the 10,000 letters we received (thanks Kiki, Jessy, and Kerin). Filling orders for, and doing accounting for hundreds of $2 checks! And thus now we have over $600 in bank fees – you can't imagine how many people bounce $2 checks. I have an inside look on just how bad the economy really is.

MR. CARR

Everything always seems to be going out of control around me. It gets so bad that it's hard to judge things, so I've set up a rough scale for that. During the production of this issue I went, in one stretch, nine weeks without doing any laundry (that's a long time for a girl who only owns two pairs of jeans – well, one's my boyfriend's). And I've gone two weeks straight without leaving the house – except for once to throw the trash out. Pretty good, huh? Someone needs to organize a Pathetic Zine Editor/Staff Awards Ceremony. Well, currently, as you can imagine, just finishing up with the longest deadline in the history, I'm a mess. It has destroyed me physically. I'm nauseous and can only sleep when I shouldn't be sleeping. I can't move my right arm much because of the effects of doing computer layout with a mouse. I bought a $150 chair, massages once a month, and a membership to Family Fitness so I wouldn't become completely handicapped – it hasn't helped much yet. And to top that off I'm going blind sitting 15 hours a day in front of the monitor. My boyfriend – my only anchor to sanity – left to go on tour for two months. I ended up getting something like mono just after that, and I slept for almost one week straight. When I got over that my computer decided not to work anymore. It bombed all day long for two weeks before it finally calmed down. My computer hates me. [Note: My other computer bombed while I was typing in this editorial so this is my second try at writing this]. Since the office is my house (and vise versa) there's no escaping the wreckage. People working all day, sleeping over at night, never being able to separate myself from the work, never being able to be alone. Everything I own being used, abused, destroyed, discarded, by friends putting in their time to do magazine work. The scum left behind for me to live in after a few all-nighters in a row. Everything is dirty and smells. God, the smells. I need a cute boy maid that wouldn't mind washing my dirty dishes and underwear.

Some things are falling together though. After over one year without one, I finally got a car. I had to put $1000 into it after the first week, but I'm happy. I don't have to ride my bicycle to the output place anymore. The all-important cassette deck broke, but now I've got a tape player in there and I can listen to my tapes *and* talk radio at the same time. One thing I can't get over is talk radio. Fast-food for the ears. I know it's garbage but I'm too clean living these days anyway. Everything is a talk show. It's not the decade of the woman, it's the decade of the talk show. Soundbites, overkill, obsessives, extremes…

All this to lead you into our new issue. I definitely got the sensory overload part down right. Basically this one's theme is Communication, but to make it a bit more inspiring for our writers it was entitled "Modern Transmissions and Sensory Overload". Of course none of them knew what the hell I was getting at so I just told them to decide what *they* thought it meant and go with it [and, as any good editor would, if they didn't decide I decided for them]. And so, this is what we got; a sort of Smorgasbord. If you don't like it raw there's some well-done. We started work on this issue six months ago so since then some of the original concepts have sort of lost their meaning, many we revamped or cut completely. This is the best (?) of six months of highly edited, mentally disturbed, sensory fucking overkill. People have nearly died to put this baby to bed, so you better enjoy it. And to our devoted BID readers, I know this is rather cliché in the zine world, but I'm sorry it took so long. (I've gotta stop writing these editorials the night before I go to the printer).

Darby

DARBY AND BRENDA ART BY JUSTIN FORBES

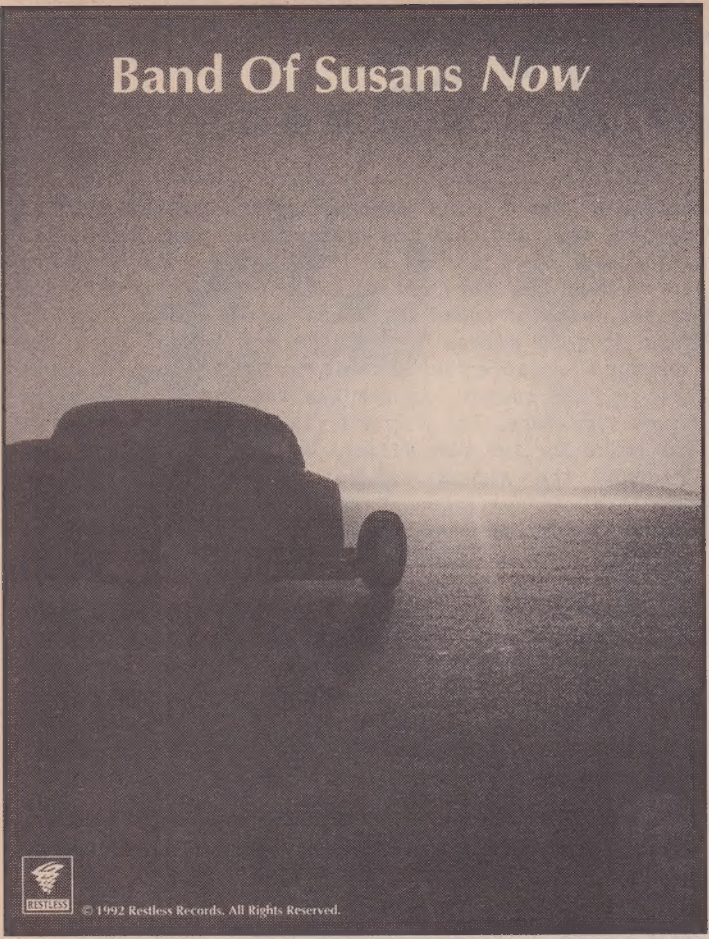
P.S. In order to help deal with this intense amount of work and to help organize my life, I mean the magazine, we've hired a daring young individual (who basically put together the *IHB Newsletter* with me) by the name of Michael Carr, or as some of you may know him, Kitty Lu Kemia [pictured in hat and glasses, and on bed with Kerin and I "rumping"]. Unfortunately we rubbed off on him before he could rub off much on us, and now *he* loses everything and can't remember things that have just happened. It's a curse. Sorry Michael.

P.P.S. Thanks to everyone on the staff for either being patient, or finally turning in their work. Thanks to the Punk House, Nadau House, LA Cacophonists, NLM, etc.… I have a list of as long as my arm so I hope these people know who they are and know they are appreciated.

Quotes: "Darby, your cat's in a bad mood." "I always feel tremors." –Michael Carr. "Life is thankless." –Kerin. "Darby, your tongue worries me." –Paul [our staff herbalist]

Note: For those of you new to the magazine, you might as well get over the small type from the beginning. As I've stated before, legible type and white space are not included in this particular publication.

An editor is someone who separates the grain from the chaff then prints the chaff. –Adlai Stevenson



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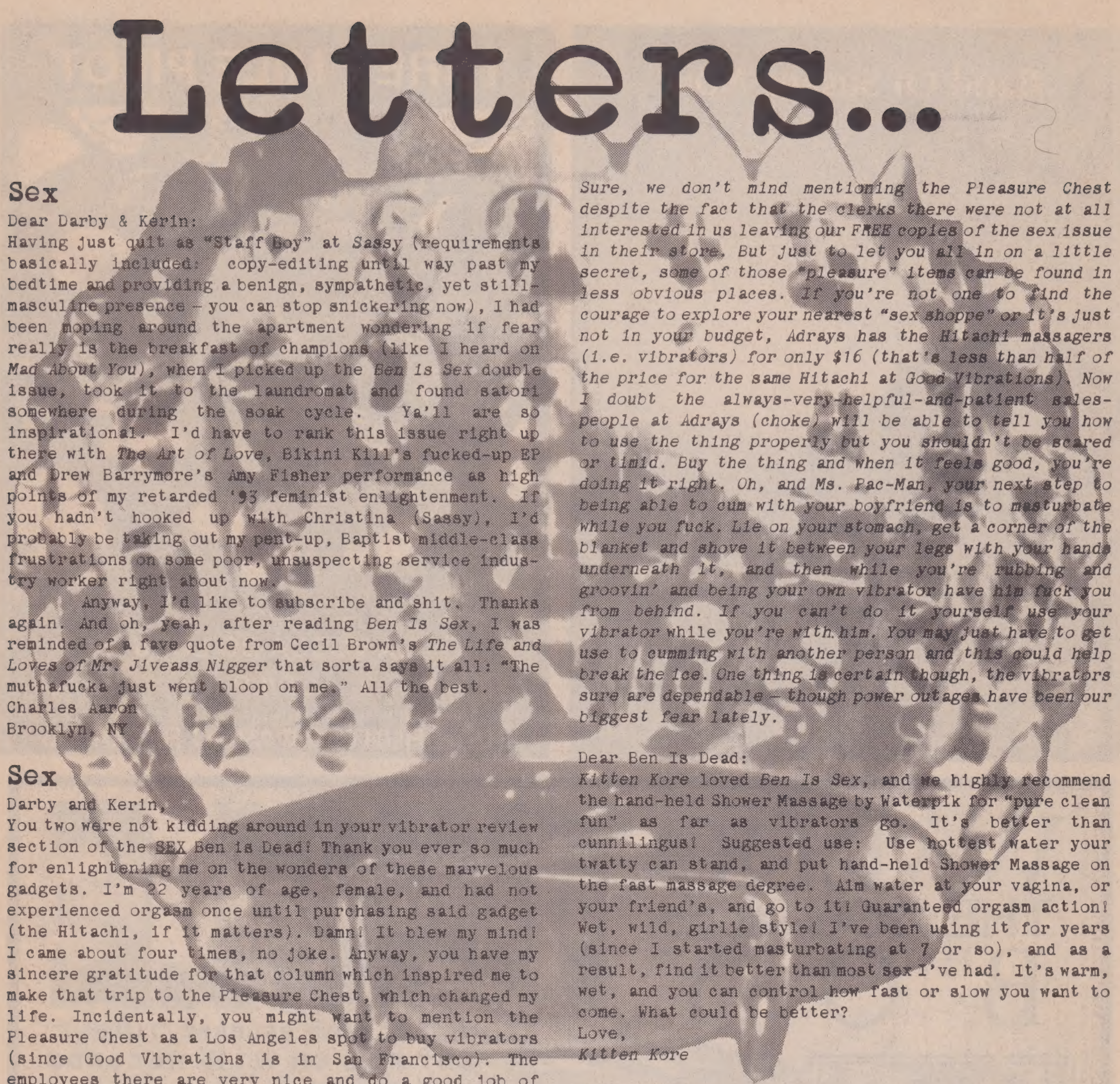


Sex

Dear Darby & Kerin:
Having just quit as "Staff Boy" at *Sassy* (requirements basically included: copy-editing until way past my bedtime and providing a benign, sympathetic, yet still-masculine presence – you can stop snickering now), I had been moping around the apartment wondering if fear really is the breakfast of champions (like I heard on *Mad About You*), when I picked up the *Ben is Sex* double issue, took it to the laundromat and found satori somewhere during the soak cycle. Ya'll are so inspirational. I'd have to rank this issue right up there with *The Art of Love*, Bikini Kill's fucked-up EP and Drew Barrymore's Amy Fisher performance as high points of my retarded '93 feminist enlightenment. If you hadn't hooked up with Christina (Sassy), I'd probably be taking out my pent-up, Baptist middle-class frustrations on some poor, unsuspecting service industry worker right about now.

Anyway, I'd like to subscribe and shit. Thanks again. And oh, yeah, after reading *Ben Is Sex*, I was reminded of a fave quote from Cecil Brown's *The Life and Loves of Mr. Jiveass Nigger* that sorta says it all: "The muthafucka just went bloop on me." All the best.
Charles Aaron
Brooklyn, NY

Sex

Darby and Kerin,
You two were not kidding around in your vibrator review section of the SEX Ben is Dead! Thank you ever so much for enlightening me on the wonders of these marvelous gadgets. I'm 22 years of age, female, and had not experienced orgasm once until purchasing said gadget (the Hitachi, if it matters). Damn! It blew my mind! I came about four times, no joke. Anyway, you have my sincere gratitude for that column which inspired me to make that trip to the Pleasure Chest, which changed my life. Incidentally, you might want to mention the Pleasure Chest as a Los Angeles spot to buy vibrators (since Good Vibrations is in San Francisco). The employees there are very nice and do a good job of putting you at ease. It wasn't easy for me either – as I was driving towards the store, I really chickened out, "Oh, I'll just buy some new clogs at Funkessentials instead," I thought. Thank God I bought this thing instead, shoes just can't match up to the big O. Even when I got it home, the terror came back (why I'm such a timid masturbator, I'll never know!) Now, the next step of course, is to be able to cum through actual human contact. Seeing as how I can't seem to make my boyfriend vibrate, I think this will take some effort, which I'm more than willing to try, since now at least I know what an orgasm feels like, I never thought I would. So thanks again girls, your magazine is fabulous! The column made me very happy and yes, to all you women who haven't cum yet, buy a vibrator dammit! If you think you can't afford one, charge it or something!
Yours in eternal ecstasy,
Ms. Pac-Man

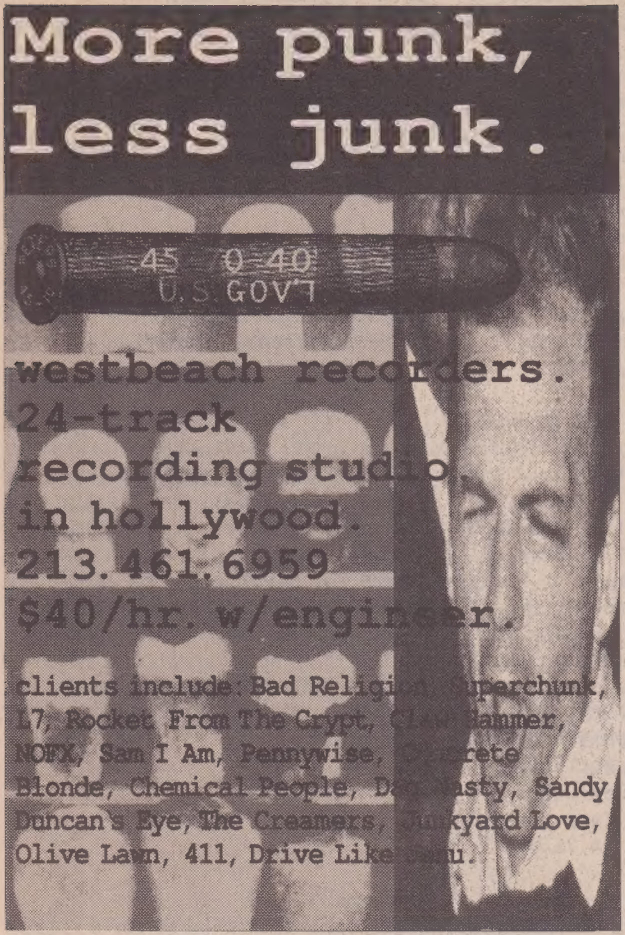
Sure, we don't mind mentioning the Pleasure Chest despite the fact that the clerks there were not at all interested in us leaving our FREE copies of the sex issue in their store. But just to let you all in on a little secret, some of those "pleasure" items can be found in less obvious places. If you're not one to find the courage to explore your nearest "sex shoppe" or it's just not in your budget, Adrays has the Hitachi massagers (i.e. vibrators) for only $16 (that's less than half of the price for the same Hitachi at Good Vibrations). Now I doubt the always-very-helpful-and-patient salespeople at Adrays (choke) will be able to tell you how to use the thing properly but you shouldn't be scared or timid. Buy the thing and when it feels good, you're doing it right. Oh, and Ms. Pac-Man, your next step to being able to cum with your boyfriend is to masturbate while you fuck. Lie on your stomach, get a corner of the blanket and shove it between your legs with your hands underneath it, and then while you're rubbing and groovin' and being your own vibrator have him fuck you from behind. If you can't do it yourself use your vibrator while *you're with him. You may just have to get use to cumming with another person and this could help break the ice. One thing is certain though, the vibrators sure are dependable – though power outages have been our biggest fear lately.*

Dear Ben Is Dead:
Kitten Kore loved *Ben Is Sex*, and we highly recommend the hand-held Shower Massage by Waterpik for "pure clean fun" as far as vibrators go. It's better than cunnilingus! Suggested use: Use hottest water your twatty can stand, and put hand-held Shower Massage on the fast massage degree. Aim water at your vagina, or your friend's, and go to it! Guaranteed orgasm action! Wet, wild, girlie style! I've been using it for years (since I started masturbating at 7 or so), and as a result, find it better than most sex I've had. It's warm, wet, and you can control how fast or slow you want to come. What could be better?
Love,
Kitten Kore

And More Sex

Kerin, Darby, BID Staff,
Hi. Thank you for writing BEN IS DEAD! I don't know why I'm writing this, but every time I read BID, I feel proud, almost horny. Every time I read the articles I find some of myself. Like the Duchess De Sade article, I thought I was the only one who loved masturbating with a shower nozzle. It might not seem so abnormal to you but I'm 14 years old, bisexual, and love S&M. I've been into it since I was 11. Even here in Hollywood it's so hard for me to find a partner because I'm so young. But with BID I can go into my own world where everyone, albeit older, is just as fun as I am. Thank you!
Yours,
Michelle Effle

To the Editor:
With regard to our interview in the *Ben Is Sex* issue, there is one particular item that I would like to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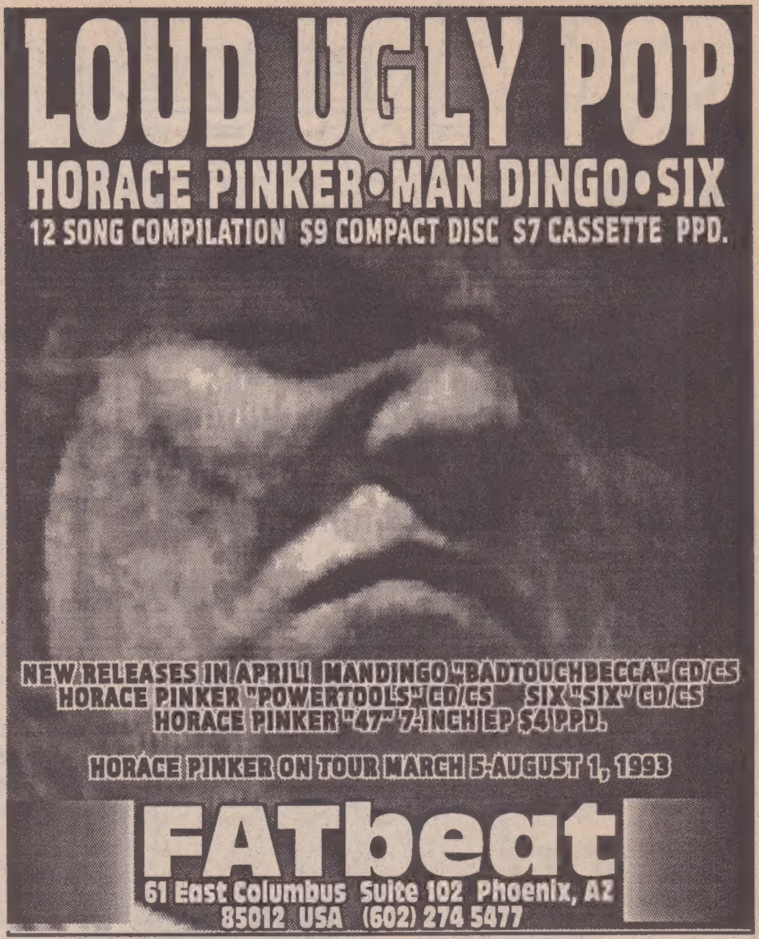

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LETTERS CONTINUED...

retract. As Don Bolles rightly pointed out to me, he has never walked into any room with a hard-on. This was an embellishment on my part and I deeply regret any pain or anguish I may have inadvertantly caused by my "tall tale."

Sincerely,
Kitten Eisenhower/ Duchess De Sade
PO Box 3731, Glendale, CA 91221-3731

Alright all you Duchess fans! You can now stop writing us and asking for the band's address. Andres Duran, this means YOU!

Dear Ben Is ~~Dead~~ Stolen,
I manage a video/bookstore in Ft. Worth, Texas. It's not exactly exciting, but carrying your publication adds some ~~spice~~ thing – I don't know what. The reason I'm writing this letter is because I want to continue to carry your magazine and other alternative rags. Yet the majority of these mags are not purchased, but stolen by supposedly "punk" kids that are too cool to buy something they believe in. Stealing from an independant bookstore that is striving to survive in an economy that is folding in on itself is not too cool. STOP STEALING THIS MAGAZINE YOU WORTHLESS SHITHEAD BRATS! YOUR PARENTS ARE PROBABLY CORPORATE LAWYERS! FUCK YOU!

Joel Matthews
Century Books & Video
3915 Camp Bowie Blvd
FTW, TX 76107

Dear Ben Is Dead Publishers,
I have to subscribe to your magazine! Even if for no other reason than the name (but it does sound like a great magazine, too). I too am getting (or trying to get) a guy named Ben out of my system. What is it with that name? My problem is that I'm a former Chicagoan stuck (for the moment) in a small town in Northwest Illinois. Nine miles from Wisconsin and 13 miles from Dubuque, Iowa. Maybe Dubuque sounds like a decent sized place, but their main source of entertainment there is cross burning. So, this is a bad place to be almost 30 and single. Unless, of course, I want a man who still lives with his mommy, is a wife beater or cheater, has a drinking problem, suffers from arrested development (and I'm not referring to the musical group), or is missing most of his teeth. Or all of the above. Sounds sad, huh? I'm sick of being told, "Oh, you'll find someone else." Ha! I just hope I can still control my bladder by the time that happens! Anyway, this is probably more than you really want to know about your subscribers, so just sign me up! A check for $15 is enclosed. I understand that gets me 6 issues. By the way, I read about you in the *Chicago Tribune* last month – just thought you'd like to know.

Thanks and good luck!
Dianne Zane

Please address all mail to Ben Is Dead Magazine, P.O. Box 3166, Hollywood, CA 90028. After the "Sex" issue, we received a nice collection of naked people photos. This time around, for our "Modern Transmissions" issue, we are happy to announce that we are accepting modems, toner cartridges, (multi-line) telephones, of course a plain paper fax would be nice. Well, we'll just let you get creative with it.

Shows
events
Etc

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

BIG MAN AND BOY IN BUBBLE SUIT COOLNESS AT THE MEATPLOW BALL (TELL THEM YOU SAW IT HERE)

TIGER TRAP, PIVOT

UCLA

A wonderful day. First, the daughter of Southern California legal compensation mogul, Larry "2.1 million" Parker, gives me a Robbie Conal print of Pete Wilson with Mickey Mouse ears. Second, Tiger Trap is playing. However, I have to work four drudgeful hours standing around the Wight Art Gallery, telling people not to touch the sculptures (the Pearl Jam life of a guard). It's okay, because I know Tiger Trap will bless me with their pervasive love and nurture me to happiness. The sun grows old and punk fucking rock indie kids swell into the room, but the Coop is limiting how many people can enter. Fugazi, I mean Pivot, is the opening band. They play a G.I. Joe aggressive set, complete with yelling, jumping, and tripping (over their own cords), in a self-inflicted melee. In my secret infatuation, I watch members of Tiger Trap dancing around the floor. It is a good sign. Finally, it's the band I've woken up and slept to for the last two weeks. I've been warming up for this show by setting aside Drive Like Jehu, and Jon Spencer and devoting myself to Heavenly, Velocity Girl, Grenadine, Lois, and Unrest. Tiger Trap's K 7" + repeat button + headphones = slant-eyed happiness. After swapping instruments a coupla times and dedicating a song to Damion, one of the founding members of the After School Special's Club, the set comes to a close and I re-entered reality. All I can think of now is that Hello Kitty sweet voice and that action drummer. They know how to dazzle the crowd. What more can we look forward to? A full length album, possibly Tiger Trap bobby socks and refrigerator magnets. Tiger Trap is pure chewing satisfaction. -David Chowee

ETHYL MEATPLOW

RECORD RELEASE PARTY

HACIENDA REAL

The food was free and the drinks were flowing at Ethyl Meatplow's release party for their new CD *Happy Days Sweetheart*. It seemed that all the movers and shakers of the scene were there. Something going on everywhere: Linda LeSabre hoisting a pitcher of margaritas, Sean deLear grabbing flesh, Damion fending off rabid females vying for his attention, DJ Don Bolles spinning and grinning, Jac Zinder looking suave, the well-heeled High Heel Titwig and entourage going for the food, and Roberto of Sandy Duncan's Eye "telling it like it is" between gulps of beer.

After showing us rough cuts of their videos, Ethyl Meatplow gave one of their best performances. The sound was clean and punchy, Biff's drumming right-on. Joining Carla and John in the fun were Clam from Torture Chorus and an essentially nude Steak, followed by what seemed to be half a string quartet. It all added up to a salubriciously goddamned good time for all. I haven't seen the scene come together like this to celebrate one of its own for quite some time. Ethyl Meatplow will score big with their new album. "Devil's Johnson" has HIT written all over it, and if radio programmers don't play it, then *they* suck.

Damion and Don finished up after Ethyl's set with their peculiar brand of Japanese/Eurotechnic dance noise until the soundman told the thinning crowd that someone's car had been burglarized. That cleared the room. –Wild Don

photo: D. Chowee

SCHOOLGIRL PURTY: ROSE OF TIGER TRAP

When I was young we didn't have MTV. We had to take drugs and go to concerts. - Steven Pearl

[CLUB] CHEAP

More than a club, Cheap was a statement for the cash-poor nineties. The evening started as one drove up to the stucco mini-mall that houses Club Tempo, and that orgasm of mixed-rate entertainment wrapped in an ambience of second-rate condom packaging. After parking the car at the (security patroled) abandoned gas station next-door on the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Western Avenue, one could stop for a quick-stand dinner at the roach-coach parked on the boulevard out front. The entry ritual was standard: after a cautious examination by security for contraband – perhaps a greasy burrito to fling at unwanted fag-rag paparazzi – the friendly and slightly bemused doorman collected the sum of $4.99.

Everyone was herded into the main room to mingle and dance while the upstairs lounge was prepared for the performances. Rather than cheap, the drinks were moderate in taste and price, and as mixed-rate as the entertainment with the bartenders charging a different sum for each visit to the bar. Attention from this, however, was diverted when the performances commenced at midnight.

Jackie Beat was the regular hostess of this low-brow cabaret, usually performing her own improvised numbers of pop-mutation interspersed among the other acts, which included an extremely cheap performance by Karen Dior on roller skates, and the bargain of the century by the Bally Sisters. The Bally babes belting out their 12-minute rendition of *Fiddler on the Roof* was alone worth the cover.

The first (and now maybe last) annual "Cheapie Awards" were held March 25. While my alter-ego, Kitty-Lu Kemia, was nominated among other fine writers for "best fag journalist", the best and brightest – including Lance Loud and *Dragazine* publisher Lois Commondemoninator – lost by a popular WeHo vote to that "Price Club" of journalism, *spunk* magazine. Best Performance by a Lead Actor was awarded to Craig Chester, for Swoon; Vicki Beat – the only biological woman nominated – won for Best Performance by a Lead Actress; Best Scaryography was awarded to the The Bally Sisters (who won over Debbie Allen); Best Special-Effects Make-up went to Alexis Arquette due to (as surmised by Vicki Beat) the number of Zone memberships in the audience; and Dragstrip 66 resoundingly won as Best Newcomer. Vaginal Creme Davis was given the Christian Farrow Lifetime Achievement Award for her numerous accomplishments on the stage and screen as the nation's most popular blacktress. Unfortunately for the L.A. club scene, *Cheap* has become a memory along with Sit and Spin, and Trade, two other clubs hosted by Jeffrey Hilbert and Richard Glatzer. Following this demise, the term "cheap" has reverted from proper noun to adjective, aptly describing other gay clubs that *flirt* with vain attempts to create an all-inclusive *temple* of diversity. Gay "alternative" has regressed to an expression of *rage*, with most clubs producing a clientele of the same inferior *meat*. My advice is to stay on the *dragstrip*.

Look for their new LA clubs: The Pink Party, and Gee, Your Wig Smells Terrific. For updates call (213)250-3005. –Kitty Lu Kemia

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

JOHN NAPIER WOLFS DOWN SOME WELL-DESERVED ~~CAKE~~ BEANS AS PRETTY GIRL LOOKS ON.

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

MEATPLOW'S BOZULICH IN GEAR

THE SUNDAYS, LUNA
"SUBURBAN SOUL"
THE PALACE

Pat Robertson would be aghast. Saturday night at a rock show in Hollywood? He'd expect rambunctious youth stirred by the devil's wanton commands degrading themselves. He counts on it. Alas, no sinners here. Well-behaved girls and boys giving their full attention to the adults on stage (even the opening act), partaking of entertainment low on floor show and large on talent. The editors of this zine would be unsettled by the sight. I had to beg to get K/D to let me review this show. I was down on all fours following commands for weeks!

Kerin was able to scam me a pair of tickets to the 1st of two sold-out shows. I tried to explain to potential co-reviewer what The Sundays sound like. The main ingredient is rock, however the most important is soul – imagine it bleached. If you add too much water, it's pop, so pour slowly, add a dash of subterranean earth, fold in talent and sift in intelligence. Nobody cooks, so that analogy didn't work. *Unforgettable Fire* but less ethereal – kind of a heavy melodica. Sounds too much like Devo Muzak and that's been done and, unfortunately, we've all been there. I believe I've cornered it - suburban soul. Middle class white people on stage, middle class white people in the audience. Not danceable nor thrashable. It's music to sway to, emote to, or think to. I dig it.

I was almost afraid to see them live. I categorize bands by the best way to enjoy them: either video, live, or recorded (heard not seen). Most bands excel in one domain and not the others. Catherine Wheel: recorded. Old Duran Duran: video. Slug: live. The Sundays are under the recorded category. I loved the show darling,

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

SEE, SOME PEOPLE *DO* LOOK COOL WITH A LIT CIGARETTE

both bands played fabulously, but… truthfully you wouldn't have missed anything if you didn't go. Unless, of course, you hadn't heard either before, the case of my co-reviewer Nina.

Luna was her favorite of the two. She says they have a mid-'70s New York sound – think Television (the band not the medium). She pointed out that the lead guitar, a Les Paul, was being played through a Vox amp. The second guitar was a Fender (for those of you who care). I suppose that creates an extra spiffy sound but I truly am ignorant of such things.

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

THE BALLY SISTERS: PROVING TWO BOOBS ARE BETTER THAN NONE

My forte is vocalization. I appreciated The Sundays' lead vocalist's sweet Cocteau Twins school of tonality. She exercises the soprano scale with multi-note lines such as the refrain from "What Do You Think" – one of the best songs I've heard about addiction.

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

BARING TIT IS GOOD. DAMION (SLUG), MARKUS (CRASH WORSHIP) & RANDY GREIF SHOW US HOW

Perhaps it is not always popular to appreciate talent and beauty in the alternative scene but, rebel that I am, I do. –Krista Krol

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

MS. RETAIL SLUT SUCKIN' CHEAP DANCER'S BOOTIE

STAR PIMP, SLUG

AL'S BAR

Star Pimp is simply a very hot thing. They are a geeked-out noisy rock band with smatterings of Fleetwood Mac, Mac Davis, and Nina Hagen. They're from San Francisco and they know it, but don't be scared. They were sweet at Al's, and they worked everyone into an exhilarated fingernail-biting frenzy. They are good and noisy. You'll love them.

By the time Slug hit the stage, we were all hot for the next squadron of uncool thin people to bash our ears into sonic submission. Slug did not disappoint. They were louder than fuck, and on that little stage the absurd impact of a six member band was at its peak.

On this night, the always nifty adventure of seeing those foxy boys bang out song after saucy song had an extra bonus. Rich, one of the guitar players, a well known alkey-or-somethin', and member of the bitchin' band Jackknife, was extra fucked up. I knew when he leaned over and spit a neon-yellow loogie on my little suede church shoe that this would be an exceptional performance. The crescendo of the evening found Rich vomiting mid-chord onto his own vintage amplifier. All in all, the evening was a smashing success. –Carla Bozulich

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

THE HANSONS: JUST A LITTLE BIT [TOO] ROCK 'N ROLL

RIG, RED AUNTS, OILER

...INITIALLY AT FROG'S

Who the hell knows where this place was? I mean who's even heard of this place? Can't remember but my car somehow got us there in one piece. The price was seven dollars, and the most incredibly vile and evil woman at the door demanded nothing less. When we first got there we were let in on a guest list but went back out to the car. Upon our second arrival at the door, not only did she take away the bands' guest lists, but she helpfully offered to let us in for half price if we bought two three dollar drink tickets (for a total of $9.50). Thank you very much. I told her I wasn't drinking because I was driving – she told me to buy two sodas for $2.50 a pop. Was I at some exclusive NYC club? Her response, "You mean

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WOOLD YOU KISS ME?

BY MARK EWERT

we all got drunk
we said we loved
one another
the next day
we all fought over
over food and
territory
drinker lovers liers
and complainers
a patient at city of
hope wrote this cancer
victims make wonderfull
lovers

Mark Gonzales, twentysomething ?, is/was one of the world's best skateboarders, of the street style – so I hear. Recently he papered with art the walls of the Los Feliz mecca for Beastie kids, the X-tra Large store, and I went to see. Mark Gonzales lives down here in Southern Cali, and xeroxes up books of his handwritten poems (and drawings) which people like Raymond Pettibon swear by. Mark can not put two words down on paper without one and one half of them being completely misspelled, and his poetry is, I think, genius-stuff, and deserves scores of essays of consideration. At X-tra Large you saw a torn-from-a-mag Calvin Klein Marky Mark (w/ babe), with "SMOKE DUST – I DO" markered on Marky's chest, and this black wig of ink, with sideburns, screwed down on his head. And all around the X-tra Large walls, around and atop shelved flannel shirts and baggy slacks, ran this scroll of brown, butcher wrapping paper transformed into a groovy cyclorama of simply drawn sky-scrapers, and alternately joyful, stricken or perplexed Jabba the Huts, with words – sad, funny, meaningless, profound – floating above names of cities, jokes, patches of social commentary, this-happened-to-me-here notes, etc... Also up were more collaged "trash bag city-scapes", poems, more Jabbas (one perverted-looking one says, "Woold you kiss me?"), more worked-over bits from magazines, candy wrappers, phone numbers, scraps of cigarette cartons, stickers, an actual Howard Finster, a reproduced Pettibon (of a chimp, the thinking animal), color photos of friends, which all seem to be from nowhere/anywhere (two kids in a hallway, or a boy at a table, or under a troubled sky – always the same image and always different), and ever so much more.

ALL KIDS GET
TO A AGE
WERE THERE
SMARTER THAN
THEYRE PARENTS
AND IT BRINGS
OUT THE CHILDNESS
IN ALL PERENTS
THEY HAVE TO SHOW
THERE KID THERE
THE PERENT AND
THEYRE IN CONTROL
AND WHAT ~~ABOUT~~
RUN AWAYS THAT
JUST DON'T GIVE
A CARE ABOUT
COUNTROL CAPTURE
THEM

Now you ask, is any of this different from what any kid anywhere covers the inside of their locker with? Well, on one level, it isn't any different at all, which is one of his work's nicest aspects. But on the other hand, Mark Gonzales is obviously a *very* smart chappie indeed: as deep as the ocean and as fresh as soda. He makes ancient-feeling work mostly out of the overlooked emotions – reflection and joy; he draws great, and his poems are simple and stunning. I have this ballpoint drawing by him called "Kaptin Kaios" (Captain Chaos, I figure) that's a mural mosaic of grinning (mostly) lil' fellas (a bunch look like turtles), each in his own little space, like a group of chipper skin cells, facing all different directions. Yet another thing that makes Marky Mark G. extraordinary is this sort of radiant view of chaos. I've seen one of the best minds in my generation.

VERY COMPLEX
FRYED OUT BRAIN
~~SELLS~~ SELL
SKATEBOADS THAT
OR TRANSPARENT
ALL MY POEMS
ARE
VERY SPECHIAL
IT DON'T MATTER
IF THEYRE
AS GOOD AS
OTHER PEOPLES
POEMS THE POINT
IS THERE POEMS
MY POEMS

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to tell me you planned on going out to a bar and not buying drinks?!" She was getting into some sort of confrontation with everyone who passed through the door. "You kids think you can come down here and all get in for free. You know we have to pay for the lights and the glasses and..." She could think of nothing else to say. I couldn't even go in to pee.

Things were starting to get rowdy when somebody suggested the bands take the show back to Long Beach. As the idea snowballed, it became obvious that the bands were not going to be allowed to play anyway. Two songs into Rig's set "Chocolate Chip Productions" stopped the show. Too loud? Too punk? Whatever.

The idea of just packing up and moving the show back to Long Beach sounded good to everyone including the 20 paying customers inside the club and the 15 or so harrassed and pissed people out on the sidewalk. My friend asked for her money back (she had only seen two songs) and was told by Chocolate Chip, "You paid for a show and you got a show! Now you better step back from me."

The club EMPTIED and the caravan headed south. I think more people showed up at Evan and Dave's house than at the club. A collection was taken up for the bands. The people that paid at Frog's still got to see their show and those who didn't had lots of beer money. Yeah, the bands played and they reeeallly rocked, ohmygod they were oh so good uh huh – maybe their best shows ever. But the point of this is that the music is for US not the stooopid club owners and there's no reason to put up with shit like that. We were lucky to have a place to take the show to but a lot of times people get ideas or they're dissatisfied but do nothing about it except flap their gums. Action took place to change a fucked situation. Bands and fans need clubs, but it actually works both ways. –Jessica "shooga" Jones

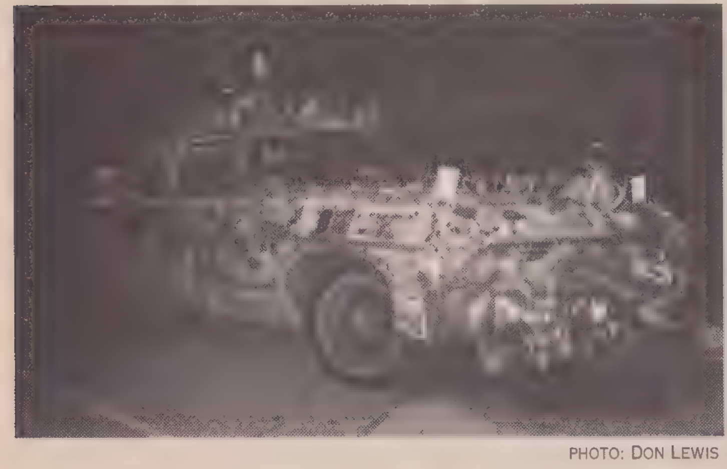

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

LA CACOPHONY SOCIETY SPONSORED WEIRD ART CAR SHOW

PHOTO: DARBY

MY (DARBY'S) GRANDMA IN GOOD COMPANY AT DOG DAY AFTERNOON #1, WHICH FEATURED L.A. DOG BANDS: WALDO THE DOG FACED BOY, THAT DOG, AND DOGSTAR. MY GRANDMA LIKED THE VIOLINIST OF THAT DOG BEST. (L TO R: PETRA OF THAT DOG, STEVE OF SLUG, GRANDMA ROSE, TODD OF SLUG, AND TOM GRIMLEY OF RUMP AND WALDO.) LOOK FOR THE AWESOME DOG TOUR COMING TO A TOWN NEAR YOU.

HANSON BROTHERS, TRIO WILMAS

RAJI'S

Two of the Hanson Bros. (Robbie on bass and Johnny on vocals) are from NoMeansNo. Hanson Bros. are a good band, but not great by any means. I mean, they were fun, but no new statements were being made, just a good time being had by band members and audience. Maybe they are feeling hemmed in by NoMeansNo, and need to blow off steam and act stupid for a change, tap into that primal rock & roll energy the way the Ramones did. Only thing is it ends up sounding like the formula 1-2-3-4 slam-out-the-barre-chords, with a lot of hooha lyrics that sound like "Hey ho let's go." The Hansons did have a few tunes that differed significantly enough from the Ramones mold to stand on their own, notably the song with the "Jack off!" chorus. They remind me of a band from '77-78 nobody remembers except me and Skip Arnold: the Sweaty Tools, Ithaca NY's answer to the Sex Pistols. Their shows were sloppy, exuberant, and sweaty, with the audience as much a part of the action as the band, yelling "Tools suck!" and giving them the finger.

Same thing happened with the Hanson's at Raji's. From note one Johnny was all over the stage and into the audience (you wouldn't have known that only a few hours earlier he lay wiped-out in the van with a fever; the only telltale sign was snot dripping from his nose). I guess these guys are into hockey (could it be because they're from Canada?) what with crisscrossed hockey sticks taped to the drumkit, Robbie donning a goalie mask, and band members' shirts emblazoned with names of hockey teams. I'll bet they even had hockey lyrics, though I couldn't decipher much through the wall of sound. Hockey hockey hockey. Yo yo yo.

Trio Wilmas is a variant on Universal Congress Of: a little looser, more like a jazzy jam session. Their first few numbers had cool heads bobbin' and fingers snappin' all over the club. It was refreshing to hear something besides regular rock, and they really swung. But after awhile the solos started to sound tired and less inventive. Maybe it was the fact that the tempos were slowing; all I know is that I started to lose interest toward the end of their set. They were like a spark that didn't quite ignite. –Wild Don

VELOCITY GIRL, BELLY

ROXY

It's springtime, it's Velocity Girl, and I'm in love. The new SubPop fever. Try them again, for the first time: Codeine, Sebadoh, and Velocity Girl. Yeah, I know, I can't resist the hype and those Sanrio girl vocals. After a long wait, Velocity Girl took the stage and started off with a song from their Slumberland 7". Then came their SubPop 7" tracks and other various new stuff. Throughout their set all eyes were fixed on singer Sarah Shannon, on her fiery hair, charisma, 31 flavors voice, and even the small bruise on her thigh. As she sang, she glanced coquettishly to the sky and to the ground, at her shyly crossed feet. Velocity Girl stole the show with their clean cut college kid looks.

Next was Belly, a KROQ band. They had three too many bleached blond heads; their guitarist had huge ears and eight too many effect pedals; their bassist looked like she was on steroids and speed, headbanging and throwing Satan hand signs; and they played two too many encores. Although the band was active, they were disappointingly rock and roll sounding. The crowd was unresponsive, even during that "Take Your Hat Off" song. In general, the audience was unable to hang with the lala, despite the sparsely scattered pogo-ers for Velocity Girl who were great. –David Chowee

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE BEAUTIFUL BRENDA LOVERS (L TO R: JESSY, MISTY, RITA) FOR MAKING THE BRENDA PARTY A SUCCESS. THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED, ESPECIALLY THE GODLY BANDS CHOLITA AND GEFILTE FUCK.

Paw
DragLine

Produced by Mr Colson & Paw

A&M

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FUCKed!

BY MICHAEL CARR

Although many in the city are clamoring for more police, others contend that current "protection" is more than adequate. Westside tax dollars pay for protection, while Eastside tax dollars primarily pay for oppression. Tax dollars aside, all of that latex worn at Club FUCK! did nothing to prevent an invasion by the vice squad of the LAPD on Sunday, April 4.

It was a law enforcement orgy with ten vice officers accompanied by twenty uniforned cops, as well as the Fire Marshall and his rubber-suited, rubber-booted flunkies. A fleet of police cars waited outside to haul away the filthy refuse of perversity that comprises LA nightlife. Helicopters hovered above the scene, in case anyone decided to entertain the notion of escape, streaking to freedom with dicks and tits to the wind.

Dear Madonna:

We need your help!!! We've been arrested for lewd conduct - for doing the same things on stage that you do. Please do something to help us. Send cash to pay for our legal defense. Host a party, or perhaps play a benefit... anything.

Are you really a part of the S&M community? The sexual exhibition community? Now is your chance to show us.

Love,
Steak
Steak

Open Letter to Madonna

The big sting began with the fire marshall closing FUCK! for suspected occupancy violations. They seized the money collected at the door as "evidence" to determine the number of patrons present. The vice cops, after paying $10 each, watched the show all evening. At the end of the show, they decided that the performances of simulated sex were lewd in nature and arrested all of the entertainers. Upon arrival at the station, the men were handcuffed to benches and the women were placed in holding cells for approximately four to five hours before everyone was released on their own recognizance.

After retaining a lawyer to represent them for a modest $5,000, the performers were told that they were being prosecuted on charges of lewd conduct – having sex in a public place, where anyone may be offended – and indecent exposure. It is rumored that stories are being fabricated by the police to stiffen up a non-existent case. The police report apparently states that Steak, one of the arrestees, pulled down a bikini bottom and was "eating another girl's pussy," although the other girl performing was wearing a sequined one-piece suit, not a bikini bottom. The report also contends that another girl was eating Steak, while she was giving head to a man. "I'm sure we were *simulating* something of that nature," Steak said, "but I can assure you that I wasn't touching any dicks! I think we all know that is ridiculous, the biggest dyke in town giving a man a blowjob! Apparently they were saying that everyone was actually having sex. It wasn't sex. They were performances. We were just having fun."

At first everyone was congratulating those involved for getting arrested, and the incident was viewed as rather humorous. Reality checked in shortly after they checked out of jail and were confronted with the seriousness of the situation. If convicted on a lewd conduct charge, one is required to register as a sex offender with the state. This type of government branding, regardless of the offense, can preclude you from certain vocations. If this information is revealed during any future investigations into your background by a potential employer, your application may be filed behind Peggy McMartin's. It is neither fair nor amusing.

Although inexcusable, this type of activity seemed inevitable once the club received the *L.A. Weekly's* stamp of approval along with a regular listing. This, combined with a move from the predominantly gay Basco's nightclub to the more hetero-oriented Dragonfly likely led to the demise of FUCK!, although probably not quite the way the organizers of the club expected. The arrest would have probably never occured at Basgo's. "The crowd [at Dragonfly] became really straight... really dorky. The security guards never enforced a dress code, so I think the atmosphere became lax," Steak told us. "At Basco's you would have recognized vice cops immediately."

It is unfortunate that our police and fire officials deem themselves as appropriate authority figures to monitor simulated sex activity in a private club. Tawdry fantasy sequences fabricated by these same officials who incorporate them into police reports is even more unfortunate. And people complain about our tax dollars funding obscene works. Is this the kind of protection we need in law enforcement?

Anyone who was at the club that evening or who wishes to help financially is encouraged to contact Gregory at 213.464.2487.

Television has proved that people will look at anything rather than each other. -Ann Landers

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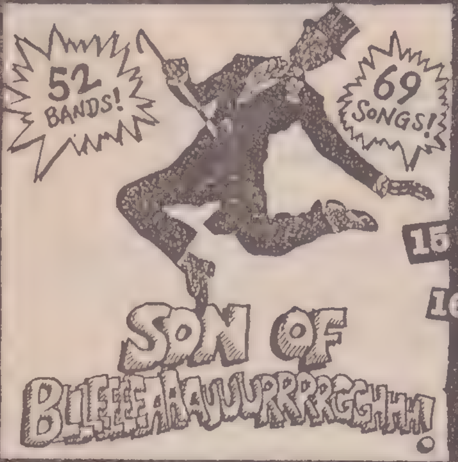
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THE JANE PRATT EXPERIENCE

BY DARBY

She's a primped-up Barbie playing spokeswoman/prop for the media-designed, dare I say, twenty-something generation though thirty (in reality), pushing forty (in disposition), and with as much street smarts as my grandma (no offense grandma)… Darby and Kerin meet Jane Pratt on The Jane Pratt Show.

Out of our heads, months late on putting this issue together, calls every day about what losers we are, telling us to put up or shut up. It's times like these when I'm glad people categorize us as a fanzine – "It's just a fucking fanzine." Who in their right mind thinks the issues come out on time? Who imagines that when they order a "zine" bulk mail they will receive it within two weeks? These people must understand, man, that we're DIY, man. And so, just to set things straight (and delay the issue's release even more), we accepted an invite to *The Jane Pratt Show* to talk about DIY [Do it Yourself] media. If you are familiar with *Sassy* magazine you already know who Ms. Pratt is. *Sassy*, as opposed to *Teen* or *Seventeen*, is the kind of magazine that might inspire a teen girl to become an outsider instead of a cheerleader. Before clinching this deal with Lifetime Cable TV, (Jane was dropped from Fox TV where the show appeared first) Ms. Pratt was the magazine's main editor – sponging credit for most of its success.

We arrived in NY a mess of insomnia. And we never actually slept much at the ritzy Sheraton Manhattan where the Jane Show had us put up. Drilling commenced at dawn and we managed maybe three hours of bed time 'til we were picked up for the show which, coupled with the fact that we didn't eat all day – we couldn't even get the driver to pull over for a street-vendor knish – explains why we were a bit worn, to say the *least*).

When we arrived, the green room was full of the show's guests. This episode included Paul Silverzweig (Mrs. Mouth on NY public access TV), Adrian Tomine (editor of zine *Optic Nerve*), May Ying Welsh (video activist), Uncle Salty (a pirate radio connoisseur), Randy Blazak (a sociology instructor from Emory University), Lanie Duro (editor of zine *Banal Probe* from Austin), and the band Ween. The show's organizers coached us on how to interact: "speak up," "interrupt," "high energy." Images of Sally Jessy kept making their way into my head. I imagined her walking in but instead Jane finally arrived to greet us. When she smiled, her caked make-up cracked around her mouth and eyes and I got scared. She had the TV People attitude – phony – lots of teeth –the smile never left – as she shmoozed around the room with her people. When she got to me, she gushed about how she enjoyed the magazine, noting the "Sex" issue. However, when I mentioned certain pieces I assumed she'd read, including the interview we did with *Sassy* writer extraordinaire Christina Kelly, she drew a blank stare. That, coupled with her automatic-pilot smile, made her look moronic – but I was unable to respond in any way other than to return her same fixed grin. I didn't want to break the energy of the room – of course Jane was doing fine with that all on her own. Without even realizing what she was saying, Jane actually proceeded to ask Kerin and I if we *paid* people ("editors") to put our magazine together. Heellllo. Kerin maintained her composure and managed an "Uh, no." *I* was in a state of DIY shock.

After making the rounds she concluded her introductions with Randy, the sociology instructor. "Oh good," Jane said, "you're going to bring depth to a topic that has no depth." And with that she and her ditzy smile scuttled out of the room.

Slowly we all looked at each other, speechless, wondering if that had actually happened or if we were all just having the same bad hallucination. When we mentioned what had happened to one of the Jane Show's staff, he rushed off to make sure she was talking about *this specific show* having no depth and not the *Jane Show* in general. Did it matter?!

In the meantime, a peace offering of a denim button-up blouse was being made to Kerin. Her Silverfish "Hips, Tits, Lips, Power" tee was not acceptable to the Lifetime Network. And the Jane Pratt staff, though they, personally, did not have a problem with the shirt, were not going to let her go on the air wearing it. Well, let's just say it was an ugly peace offering and we convinced them to just cover up the "t" in "tits" [Note: When the show was edited they again censored Kerin's shirt by cutting out my on-show reference to it and to how alternative media doesn't have to worry as much about (self)censorship].

After seeing Jane, we all politely declined their guest "make-overs" and were ushered out to the stage.

Kerin, Lanie Duro, and I were the first guests and we were seated in the faux living room set up in some futuristic brown ugly-something decor. When Jane came in, I asked if she would be sitting next to us, to which she replied, "No, I only do that for the more serious shows."

We were on edge and couldn't keep from cracking jokes to one another about what we'd experienced thus far. Jane began her intro.

> *"Fed up with mainstream media? Well, so are today's guests. So they've created their own: comic books, zines, pirate radio stations, public access TV shows, that express what's on their minds, not Dan Rather's, or mine for that matter. Now let's get started."*

With a proclamation like that, we were left to ponder what exactly was on Jane's mind anyway (or at least the mind of her writers). At this point I wasn't sure if we'd be able to concentrate enough to get through the taping.

Once the show *did* get underway, Ms. Jane ended up giving us make-overs after all, as she reinvented the names of her guests. Kerin became Karen, Romeo (my last name – as in Alfa) became Romeo (as in Juliet), and Lanie Duro became Lanie Duroaka. During the time Jane was still speaking Lanie interrupted asking, "What's the 'aka'?", while Jane obliviously continued reciting her lines. When one of the show's staff caught on, Jane was asked to redo her speech. Turns out that "aka" stood for "a.k.a." and was to intro the aliases used by Lanie.

Regardless of our replies to the questions Jane relayed from her Teleprompter, she couldn't come up with her own follow-up questions, and so we jumped from topic to topic without really coming to any culmination. Even the sociology instructor couldn't save this show in the "depth" department. The staff actually stood on the sidelines frantically waving large signs at us that said "jump in." Since only a few of us could see them, we tried in vain to ask the questions Jane *should* have been asking, but after a while lost all focus of the original concept. Was it DIY or SJA (Save Jane's Ass)?

It was obvious that Jane couldn't hold the audience, couldn't capture the energy, and couldn't carry the conversation. She just didn't relate to anything that was being said and no one believed that she cared.

What was needed was a *real* person, actually communicating real thoughts on real topics without the fake cover-up and fake smiles and fake energy. Perhaps Jane Pratt was once a real human, but whatever life she had seemed sucked out of her. These TV people wanted to use her as an alternative to the mainstream classic old-age TV talk show host, but instead changed her into exactly that. And that's what the majority of our discussion on DIY got into. Doing it yourself without sucking up to or becoming just like the mainstream you despise. The mainstream you are either trying to change or ignore. But for some that is not a concern. It's obviously not on Jane Pratt's mind.

Editor's Note: We have been informed that The Jane Pratt Show has just been cancelled. Reruns will continue on Lifetime until December.

Not to transmit an experience is to betray it. —Elie Wiesel

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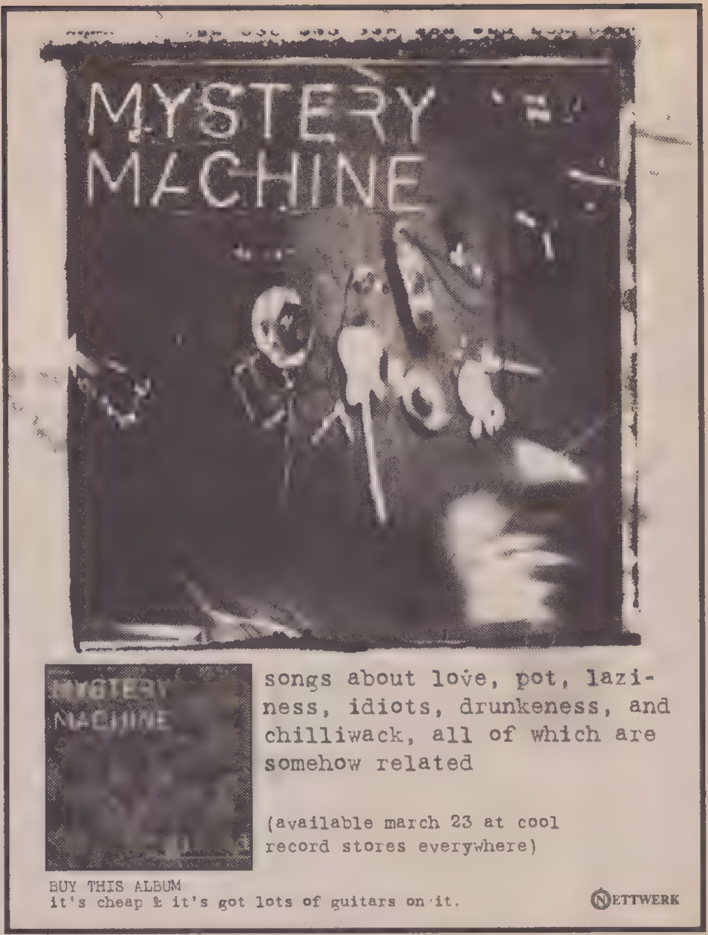

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Communicable Diseases
Infecting the Established Media

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF BY MICHAEL CARR

Through the current onslaught of modern transmissions and sensory overload, the media establishment is no longer an impervious entity conveying messages of consumerism. Modern technology has rendered obselete any sole reliance upon television, radio and newspapers for information. In essence, the established media is quite immunosuppressed, and ripe for infection as explained in Media Virus, *a new work-in-progress by author Douglas Rushkoff.*

A literator of media and popular culture, Doug has authored two other books that address these issues. His first book, Free Ride *(Bantam), explored many of the new hi-tech, consciousness-expanding techniques and viruses, and his most recent work,* Cyberia, *to be released through Dell in October, 1993, details our current cultural renaissance. He has also written about these topics in several other outlets, as former senior editor of* Exposure *magazine, and as a columnist for other magazines including* Detour *in Los Angeles, and* Evolution *in London.*

Escaping the infamous prostitution ring known as the "Hollywood Establishment", Doug now resides in New York, where I contacted him upon learning of his new book. Wary of my initial advances, he warmed considerably when I explained the theme of this issue, and mailed him a copy of the Sex issue. Self-described as "a sexual being" Doug also enjoys a good "mind fuck", and the following resulted from my extensive probing during not one, but two satisfying interview sessions. And I think he respects me.

GRRRL
MUSIC TELEVISION
RIOT

Syringe art realized by Scott Ulrich. Concept by Darby.

The most important concept for people to realize now is that the media is not the representation of reality; it is rather an extension of our reality. It's not a *picture* of human consciousness and its concerns, but rather a *forum* for human interaction and concern. Once we see the media as real, then we realize that our participation as individuals in the media is participation in life, and not in a perceived comment about life. It is true that the media frames certain aspects of our existence. If you create something for television or for a newspaper within the context of each medium, it doesn't mean that the result is a comment about life as much as it means that life has become a series of mirrors and self-reflective panels on which we communicate to each other. Participation in the media is no different than looking in the mirror to comb your hair, or hitting someone, or even fucking someone. A participant in modern culture must understand that the media and technology are not unnatural things; they're an extension of nature.

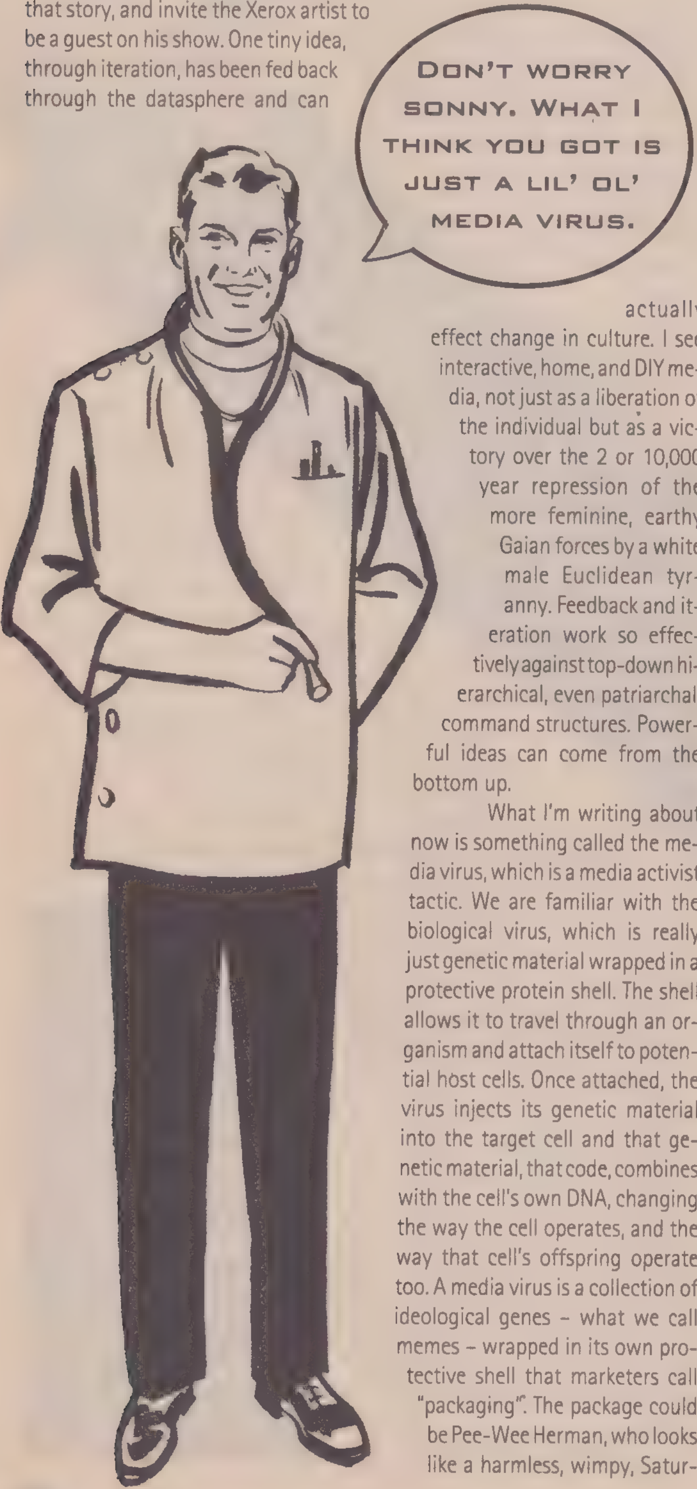
Secondly, people of our generation are aware that media is not uni-directional. Even if one is watching a television show it's a participatory experience, not just a passive, couch-potato experience. The moment in our history when media became participatory rather than passive was the invention of Pong. Our relationship to the media changed even though it wasn't a television program we were altering. We were using the television through the movement of our hands on a "paddle", and turning it gave us control of what looked like a computer cursor moving up and down on the screen hitting a little ball back and forth. Albeit a very simple thing to do, it was the first time that people not only had a choice as to what image was on their screen, but they could actually manipulate the image on the screen. Children who grew up with Pong in their environment saw television as a different thing than people who grew up before it. And this is why people who are generations younger have a more participatory attitude toward their media.

The more choices that people have about what appears on their screen, the better. It was really not even a hop, skip and a jump to a computer screen where people really have an interactive monitor on what is happening. They can "talk" through it and exchange information. Technology has given the individual in our society the opportunity to feed back. That is the third element that people need to realize about media; if they want to become empowered, they will have to jump into data oceans and surf the technological white water. They have to see themselves as feedback generators in a giant chaos or fractal equation. That is what the media has done, particularly interactive media and home media (camcorders, faxes, PC's, modems, telephone trees, laser printers and those are just the items I see when I look around my office).

What I think we are seeing

> We picked the name 'Smart Drugs' because it allows the virus to position itself in the public's mind. Once it's in, it begins to reframe the entire drug issue, destroying the 'just say no' programming.
>
> –Bill Powell, creator of the "Smart Drugs" media virus

Language acts like a virus. A virus repeats copies of itself. So does a word. A word is alive by its nature and function. –William Burroughs now is the evolution of the media as a re-emergence of the Gaian spirit of the planet. The Gaia hypothesis proposes that the earth uses many different self-regulatory mechanisms in the manner of the chaos equation. A tiny butterfly in China can flap its wings and create a hurricane in New York, meaning that a tiny event anywhere in the giant fractal system if it is re-iterated, or repeated enough and enough and enough, can create a huge, huge change. If you create one tiny idea, or even merge two ideas together that haven't been pasted together before, (such as placing Ronald Reagan in a diaper, an image that may be provocative in some way), you can re-iterate it by using a Xerox machine to make ten thousand copies of it and placing that image all over town. Someone may see it, resonate with it and take it to work. If she works at a magazine, a co-worker might notice it and say "Hey, that's an interesting thing, let's do a story on that," and then Geraldo may see that story, and invite the Xerox artist to be a guest on his show. One tiny idea, through iteration, has been fed back through the datasphere and can actually effect change in culture. I see interactive, home, and DIY media, not just as a liberation of the individual but as a victory over the 2 or 10,000 year repression of the more feminine, earthy Gaian forces by a white male Euclidean tyranny. Feedback and iteration work so effectively against top-down hierarchical, even patriarchal, command structures. Powerful ideas can come from the bottom up.


DON'T WORRY SONNY. WHAT I THINK YOU GOT IS JUST A LIL' OL' MEDIA VIRUS.

What I'm writing about now is something called the media virus, which is a media activist tactic. We are familiar with the biological virus, which is really just genetic material wrapped in a protective protein shell. The shell allows it to travel through an organism and attach itself to potential host cells. Once attached, the virus injects its genetic material into the target cell and that genetic material, that code, combines with the cell's own DNA, changing the way the cell operates, and the way that cell's offspring operate too. A media virus is a collection of ideological genes – what we call memes – wrapped in its own protective shell that marketers call "packaging". The package could be Pee-Wee Herman, who looks like a harmless, wimpy, Saturday morning television character, but who actually promotes gay lifestyles in subtle ways. The term "smart drugs" is another package constructed to excite our interests... A person may ask, "Smart drugs? What are smart drugs? What does that mean?" When the smart drugs virus spreads throughout the datasphere, thanks to its shell, it releases its memes on an unsuspecting public. People start talking about the problems with American pharmaceutical laws, and the inability of AIDS patients to obtain drugs that could help them. They point out how silly the war on drugs is, especially waged with a slogan like "Just Say No", which really makes no sense in a world where we know that many positive contributions to our culture were made by people who took psychedelic chemicals.

The most powerful activist tool today is the media virus. And that can be an event, an invention, even a homemade video like the Rodney King tape, which is a beautiful media virus that wasn't really intentional. The potency of media viruses comes from the fact that they spread through the datasphere for one reason, protected by their packaging shells, and then release controversial information, which may have nothing to do with why that virus spread in the first place. It is this way that a media virus can communicate not only to an unsuspecting public, but through an unsuspecting media. CBS, the station that broadcast Pee Wee Herman, or Warner Bros. Records, the company that carried Ice-T's records, were thus serving as unwitting conduits for very potent memes which have had real effects on the operating command structure of our culture.

Further, as we've learned from quantum physics, the observation of reality changes that reality. Likewise, once something invades the media, it has invaded the real world. This is why media virus are so effective at provoking "a cultural immune response". The best viruses get their enemies quite riled up. And that actually helps the virus spread. I think that the authority figures in our culture will slowly realize that the only way to stop the virus is to try to not react to it. Everyone was up in arms after listening to the lyrics on Ice-T's record, *Cop Killer*, and Ice-T ended up selling a lot more copies as a result. He also made a greater impact, because he then wasn't just rapping to his record buying public about his perception of the police. When he finally appeared on TV, on *Entertainment Tonight* and CBS, and in the *New York Times*, he received a new platform for the memes within his virus: the right to free expression, and how we live in a white culture that is afraid of black lyrics, and all of the memes that were hidden in his song. He was able to express these very directly because of the story *about* his media virus.

EACH TELEVISION AND EACH MEDIA OUTLET IS LIKE A CRYSTAL ON A CHANDELIER. IT IS A MATTER OF ACTIVISTS DEVISING BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER WAYS OF PENETRATING THAT CHANDELIER. BY DISGUISING THEIR AGENDAS AS VERY CAREFULLY FORMULATED VIRUSES.

The principals of chaos math are also friends of the media virus. In their media manifestation viruses exhibit the same self-similarity that is characteristic of fractals, which is such an interesting frame work in which to view the current media-scape. I was watching *Geraldo* one day, and his guests were experts that had participated in the Amy Fisher story. During the show they played one of the three television movies about the story. The monitor on the stage was showing a scene from the television movie, and in that scene was a dramatized press conference from the real life TV show, *Hard Copy*. In that press conference, the *Hard Copy* producers had their own monitor, and on that monitor they played a tape of that evening's show. And within that monitor, they showed another monitor which showed a tape – the real life tape – of the real Amy Fisher that was made by her boyfriend, with his camcorder, in a gym.

News, if unreported, has no impact at all. It might as well have not happened. —Gay Talese

And then the scene in the television movie cut to Amy Fisher – the fake, dramatized portrayal played by Drew Barrymore – watching that evening's edition of *Hard Copy* with the real Amy Fisher on the screen. Drew Barrymore reacted to it as if she was Amy Fisher herself seeing it for the first time. Then there was a cut to a commercial for the news that night, for an exclusive interview with Joey Buttafuco who was going to attack the way he was made to appear on the *Phil Donahue* show earlier that week.

It's a fun-house of mirrors with media about media about media. And people who launch media viruses understand that this is the way the media works, as a giant system of self-similar and self-reflecting walls. Each television and each media outlet is like a crystal on a chandelier. It is a matter of activists devising brighter and brighter ways of penetrating that chandelier, by disguising their agendas as very carefully formulated viruses. The Amy Fisher story is a perfect example of how these viruses can bounce around. It's like shooting an electron and seeing how matter responds to it. A provocative idea – a teenage girl who shoots a middle-aged man's wife, and the question of whether or not he fucked her – is an idea that is bounced all around.

The Woody Allen/Mia Farrow story is the same sort of concept and it was bounced all around as well, although not as much as Amy's story. However, this virus was co-opted by special-interest groups for their own ends. It was actually Newt Gingrich (House Whip - Republican), who made a speech equating this virus with the decline of "family values". This was at a point in time when Clinton was in New York with Gore during the Democratic Convention, which was giving them a huge boost. During this time, Dan Quayle was having his ridiculous battle with the idea of the New York and Hollywood cultural elite. Newt Gingrich stated that the Woody and Mia fiasco was a perfect demonstration of New York family values. He delighted that Clinton and Gore supporters, in New York, were *those* kinds of people. Gingrich tried to hop onto, and co-opt, a media virus, just as the New Right tries to hop onto the AIDS virus by claiming it is evidence of God's condemnation of gay values.

However, media viruses always return to haunt the authoritarian regime. Viruses, when they have had a chance to iterate through the datasphere enough, eventually always and without exception, attack the host organism. In this case the host organism is not culture as a whole, but the imposed cultural regulatory body. It always works in favor of countercultural and insurgent forces. The Willie Horton virus, for which Bush denies any responsibility – perhaps justifiably – was one created by a group supporting his election in '88. The group decided to make an example in the media against Dukakis of a black man, whom he had released on furlow, and how that man killed someone during his time out of prison. Ostensibly, this particular shell was supposed to convey a message that Dukakis was weak. In contrast, the real message within that virus was that black people were killing white people and a Democrat from a city like Boston, a guy like Dukakis, would help black people while Bush would keep the black people in jail. It was a way of promoting racism under a veil that was no more cleverly concocted than a Klan hood. By the 1992 election, that virus had iterated and returned to stab Bush in the back. He couldn't say anything without being accused of mudslinging, racist tactics. The virus was exposed. Now it was the Democrats bringing up Willie Horton.

Viruses are great, because they're cheap and easy to construct. On the other hand, the way the established regime has to market their mindset is through very large actions. They are in a losing battle, because they are in command and they have to say yes in a very, very big way. They have to make a demonstration of power. Those in the counter culture on the other hand are more like minute men. The way the media space is set up now, all they have to do is one tiny provocative thing and it spreads just as fast as a huge speech by the President. One tiny "no" from a two-year old means more than ten big "yesses" from its adult parents. What has happened now is that the sphere that used to be run by the Euclidean rules of mathematics – the bigger the number is the more powerful it is – that sphere has cracked. Now we live in a much more chaotic, volatile world where one little match – like a tiny media virus – can set the whole place ablaze.

SIGHT:

IT'S BEEN DETERMINED THAT HUMAN EYES CAN PHYSIOLOGICALLY DISTINGUISH ABOUT **10 MILLION DIFFERENT COLOR SURFACES**, WHICH MAKES YOU WONDER WHY WE DON'T USUALLY GET TO SEE SUCH A **PSYCHEDELIC DISPLAY**. MAYBE WE SIMPLY DON'T CONCEIVE OF SUCH A BRIGHTLY COLORED WORLD. WE SEE WHAT WE EXPECT OR HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO SEE. THE RETINA OR PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATE OF THE EYE IS **EMBRYONICALLY AN OUTGROWTH OF THE BRAIN**, PROVIDING ONLY MINIMAL **PREPROCESSING OF VISUAL INFORMATION**. WE ACTUALLY SEE DEEPER IN. UNLIKE SMELL OR TASTE, OUR VISION IS COMPOSED FROM MULTIPLE INPUTS THAT HAVE BEEN COMBINED WITH **CONCEPTUAL INTERPRETATION**. THE ACTUAL IMAGE FOCUSED AT THE REAR OF THE EYEBALL IS AN ABSTRACT ELECTRO-CHEMICAL PATTERN, MIXED DOWN FROM BOTH EYES INTO A BLENDED SIGNAL (FOR DEPTH) AT THE CROSSING OF THE OPTIC NERVES JUST BELOW THE MIDBRAIN (THE **OPTIC CHIASMA**). FROM THERE IT'S SENT TO THE REAR OF THE UPPER BRAIN (THE CEREBRUM), WHERE SOMETHING HAPPENS THAT WE DON'T PARTICULARLY UNDERSTAND, SINCE OUR SCIENCE HAS ONLY THE MOST PRIMITIVE IDEA OF WHAT THE PROCESS OF **EXPERIENCE** IS. OUR EYES TRANSFORM "VIBRATING" LIGHT INTO CHEMICAL INFORMATION, WHICH OUR BRAIN RECONFIGURES INTO IMAGES STORED AS KNOWLEDGE IN THE BRAIN. THE VISUAL EXPERIENCE IS ONLY COMPLETE WHEN THE VISUAL ASPECT OF THE **MOCK-UP OF REALITY** WE CALL OUR SELF-AWARENESS IS UPDATED, ANNOUNCING THE CONDITIONS OUR BRAIN HAS DECIDED ARE PRESENT BEFORE US. VIA OUR BRAIN'S **BODY-SIMULACRA**, THE ILLUSION IS MAINTAINED THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY SEEING THROUGH THE EYE. OF COURSE, WHAT WE ACTUALLY SEE IS DEPENDENT ON THE EYE'S NARROW AND DELICATE "MECHANISM." IT IS AMAZING HOW MUCH INFORMATION MANAGES TO FILTER THROUGH THE SQUARE-MILLIMETER WINDOW AT THE BACK OF EACH EYE (A LITTLE SMALLER THAN A CAPITAL "D" ON A TYPEWRITER). TO RECEIVE INPUTS AT NIGHT, EYES HAVE TO MANUFACTURE A CHEMICAL CALLED **VISUAL PURPLE**. THAT TAKES A WHILE, THE FIFTEEN MINUTES OR SO IT TAKES TO **DARK-ADAPT**. WHEN YOU STEP FROM DARK INTO LIGHT THIS CHEMICAL IS INSTANTANEOUSLY DESTROYED AND **CHAOS** RESULTS, MOMENTARILY BLINDING US. THE LENS OF THE EYE IS ACTUALLY ALL THAT PREVENTS US FROM PERCEIVING THE **ULTRAVIOLET (BLACK) LIGHT** IN DAYLIGHT. EAGLES, WHOSE EYES ARE THE SAME SIZE AS OURS (AND THEREBY ACTUALLY HEAVIER THAN THEIR BRAINS), EMPLOY A **SNAPSHOT** IMAGING SYSTEM, RATHER THAN OUR SLOWER **SCANNING** SYSTEM. OUR BRAIN BUILDS UP AN IMAGE THROUGH **MULTIPLE GLANCES**, OUR EYES JERKED BACK AND FORTH BY THEIR **HARNESS** MUSCLES AN AVERAGE OF 100,000 TIMES A DAY. THIS SCANNING APPROACH MAY BE LINKED TO OUR GREATER SUBJECTIVITY. **TRANCE VISION** MAY BE ONE FORM OF HUMAN SNAPSHOT VISION, POORLY DEVELOPED BECAUSE WE WERE NOT TAUGHT TO DO IT. WE HAVE LITTLE PRACTICE INTERPRETING **TOTAL FIELD** IMAGES. THE BRAIN **RESONANCE** PRODUCED BY **CONCERTED GAZING** (AND OTHER METHODS), **FLOODS THE SCREEN**, OVERWHELMING THE **MUMBLE** OF **SUBVOCALIZED DESCRIPTION** THAT HOLDS US TO THE EXPECTED WORLD. THEN WHO KNOWS WHERE WE ARE? AN UNIMPORTANT DETAIL, THE ANGLE OF THE SUN FOR INSTANCE, OR A SHADOW, CAN ALERT US TO OUR LIVING, IN A POETIC, ZEN MOMENT. ACCULTURATION LEADS US TO SEE CERTAIN THINGS WITH PRECISION, AND NOT TO SEE AT ALL DETAILS OUR WORLDVIEW HAS DECIDED ARE UNIMPORTANT. MEANWHILE, AT THE SURFACE OF THE EYE, THE PHYSIOLOGICAL SHUTTER MECHANISM BLENDS EVENLY WITH OUR SOCIAL BEING. WE APPEAR AS THOUGH WE'RE LOOKING AT WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS, BUT IN TRUTH, WE SEE WHATEVER WE'VE DECIDED TO.

—PAUL IANNONE

Technology... is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other. –C.P. Snow

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T-SHIRT LEXICOLOGY OF THE EXTREME RIGHT

BY REVEREND AL CACOPHONY

If fashion is a visual language, one of its most basic parts of speech must be the t-shirt. Luckily for those of us not well-versed in the subtle and complex lexicon of fashion, the t-shirt often speaks directly in our own native tongue. And if a t-shirt has something to say, you can bet it's important. Unlike its slogan-bearing cousins, the coffee mug and button, a t-shirt cannot be conveniently set aside before a confrontation with those of varying sympathies. Rarely is a message printed on the back. A t-shirt bears its message up front, maintaining an everpresent subtext in all encounters. And as a product of mass-production, the t-shirt expresses more than a personal viewpoint. It is a socio-political document, a cultural artifact representing a significant and collective worldview.

The Fastest Way
To a Woman's Heart
Is Straight Through
Her F**king Rib Cage
BLOW
ME

"So what," you say. "I've got a whole closet full of extra-large worldviews at home, and you don't see me trying to make a treatise out of it." Well, we trust you to interpret your own truly punk, psychedelic Satan-lovin, lewd 'n' shockin, peace 'n' freedom T's. What we explore here is the truly exotic, the t-shirt lexicology of the extreme right. And we're not talking about the people who just voted Republican last time around. We're talking about the kind of people who really hate you — better still — who want to kill you, and could because they all own guns.

Our survey was made at a recent Cacophony Society outing to the Great Western Gun and Knife and Military Show at the Pomona County Fairgrounds. Cacophonists specialize in the exploration of crackpot crevices of So-Cal culture, of little infiltrations of spacey New Age cults, and fanatical desert communes, so our little game of Redneck for a Day was refreshingly down-to-earth.

Immediately upon entering the Gun Show, we were harangued by loudspeakers demanding to know why we hadn't joined the NRA. Not only could we enter the Gun Show free by doing so, but we would also receive our choice of NRA cap or official NRA t-shirt, adorned with handsomely rendered swastikas, hammers and sickles and the slogan,

THE EXPERTS ALL AGREE. GUN CONTROL WORKS.

Appealing in its anti-authoritarian sentiments, this t-shirt, like many at the show, expressed alarm at the meddling of a paternalistic state. Similarly there was the wordy,

WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA. PUT ON YOUR HELMET. BUCKLE YOUR SEAT BELT. LEAVE ALL GUNS IN THE COLLECTION BOX. LEAVE ALL CIVIL LIBERTIES AND RIGHTS AT THE BORDER. YOUR FREEDOM STOPS HERE!

Now you might ask why these people would want to kill us, the readers of Ben is Dead, when we all seem to pretty much agree on the basic hands-off position on government control? Let's try a few other measures of political temperament. How do you feel about the Kennedys? Would you wear a t-shirt that says,

TED KENNEDY'S CAR HAS KILLED MORE PEOPLE THAN MY GUN.

If not a t-shirt, perhaps a bumper sticker or a coffee mug? They were all available, and you probably don't own a one of them. What about a T-shirt that just says,

I ♥MY ASSAULT RIFLE.

Would you wear that? Yes, I guess you might.

Perhaps the nuances of personal style which might cause you to be the target of .45-caliber disapproval are too easily disguised amongst all the abstraction of political philosophies. Let us turn instead toward the more personal preferences expressed on these garments.

Though the bulk of this show was dedicated to the sale of guns and other combat-related accessories and media, the number and range of t-shirts offered was sufficiently large to merit subspecialization along the lines of gender. Of the dozen or so vendors specializing in t-shirts, the majority set up separate "boutiques" for men's and women's shirts, easily differentiated by the lighter colors of shirts intended for women. Some of the more popular feminine messages were as follows:

CAUTION! I CAN GO TO 0 TO FULL BITCH IN 1.2 SECONDS.

I MAY BE EASY BUT I'M NOT CHEAP.

SO MANY MEN SO LITTLE TIME.

I HAVE PMS, AND I CARRY A GUN.

THE BEST THING TO MAKE FOR DINNER IS RESERVATIONS.

ERA STINKS — BUY ME DINNER.

IF THE SHOE FITS, CHARGE IT.

The message is there for those who are able to read between the breasts: these women will not be bound by traditionalist expectations of decorum and passivity. They express a genuine crassness unmitigated by social constraints. Yet the women's shirts are relatively mundane in comparison to those targeted for that extra Y chromosome. Who, but a dyed-in-the-wool humanitarian, could help but smile at these nuggets of folksy masculine wisdom?

IF I SAY I LOVE YOU, CONSIDER ME DRUNK.

IF IT HAS TITS OR WHEELS, IT'S GOING TO GIVE YOU PROBLEMS.

The catch phrase positively rejoices in being a formula, an accepted gambit, a ready-mades reaction. —John Gross

das klown
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I WASN'T THERE, I WASN'T DRINKING. THAT'S MY STORY, AND I'M STICKING TO IT.

THIS IS NOT A BEER BELLY. IT'S A GAS TANK FOR A SEX MACHINE.

THE MORE HAIR I LOSE, THE MORE HEAD I GET.

Not only are such t-shirts employed as a surefire expression of gender identity, but they also function as a sort of tertiary sex trait enticing the opposite sex with messages of sexual readiness and savoir faire... Who could resist these intimate suggestions?

I FUCK ON THE FIRST DATE.

IF YOU'RE SMOKING AFTER SEX, YOU'RE GOING TOO FAST.

SEX IS A MISDEMEANOR. THE MORE I MISS, THE MEANER I GET.

HUNTERS MAKE BETTER LOVERS. THEY GO DEEPER INTO THE BUSH. THEY SHOOT MORE OFTEN, AND THEY EAT WHAT THEY SHOOT.

I MIGHT NOT GO DOWN IN HISTORY, BUT I WILL GO DOWN ON YOUR SISTER.

JUST DO ME!

But there is an irresolvable tension between the accepted male impulse toward sexual wanderings and the traditionalist orientation. Certain t-shirts document its transgression past the boundaries of heterosexuality.

RIDING A JAPANESE MOTORCYCLE IS LIKE GETTING HEAD FROM A QUEER. IT FEELS GOOD UNTIL SOMEONE SEES YOU.

What are we to make of this offhand acknowledgment of the joys of masculine salami smoking? Or of the brutal social pressures which force the wearer to deny his own immediate perception of pleasure? Alongside thse shirts were sold two others safely dismissing the homoerotic impulse with a laugh and a bullet.

SILLY FAGGOT! DICKS ARE FOR CHICKS.

IN SAN BERNANDINO WE HAVE A CURE FOR AIDS. WE SHOOT FAGGOTS.

Sexual pleasure and disgust coalesce into white trash self-loathing and cognitive dissonance. Existential confusion descends into scatological paranoia and is silkscreened on a cotton polyester blend.

I SMOKE DOPE, CHEWED ROPE, DIRTY DANCED, FRENCH ROMANCED, FUCKED, FARTED, FOUGHT, SHOT THE MOON, AND DROVE BIG TRUCKS, BUT I AIN'T NEVER SEEN NO SHIT LIKE THIS .

WARNING! EVERYONE HAS A GUN, A KNIFE OR A BONER, AND IS OUT TO SHOOT, STAB, OR SCREW YOU.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE MY ATTITUDE, CALL 1-800-EAT-SHIT.

Hopelessly confused, the wearer advertises his brutalized psychic conditions in a pathetic plea for ideological support. Is it any wonder that Desert Fox International, a German vendor of nazi memorabilia was doing such a brisk business in T-shirts printed with expressionist woodcuts, heraldic imagery, fascist insignias, and the words of 19th-century philosophers and poets, including Friedrich Schiller's, "Nur im Feld ist der Mann etwas wert."

ONLY IN THE FIELD OF BATTLE IS MAN STILL WORTH ANYTHING.

How could anyone wearing these words upon his chest help but feel ennobled in his own daily battle, his everyday conflicts, and the psychological Kamp of day-to-day existence in the trailer court?

Is this then a movement to be feared? All the more dangerous because of its origin within a heavily armed minority? Can we expect to see these proto-fascist sentiments spreading from T-shirts to bumper stickers to newspapers and ultimately the voting ballots? Or might we not instead just conclude (as another T-shirt would have it) that

SHIT HAPPENS?

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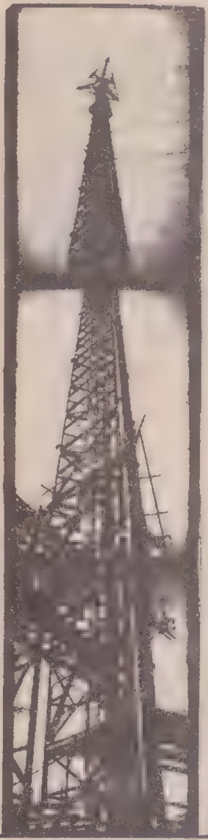

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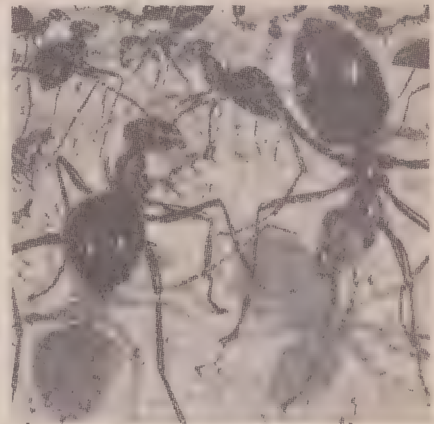

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-Spiro T. Agnew

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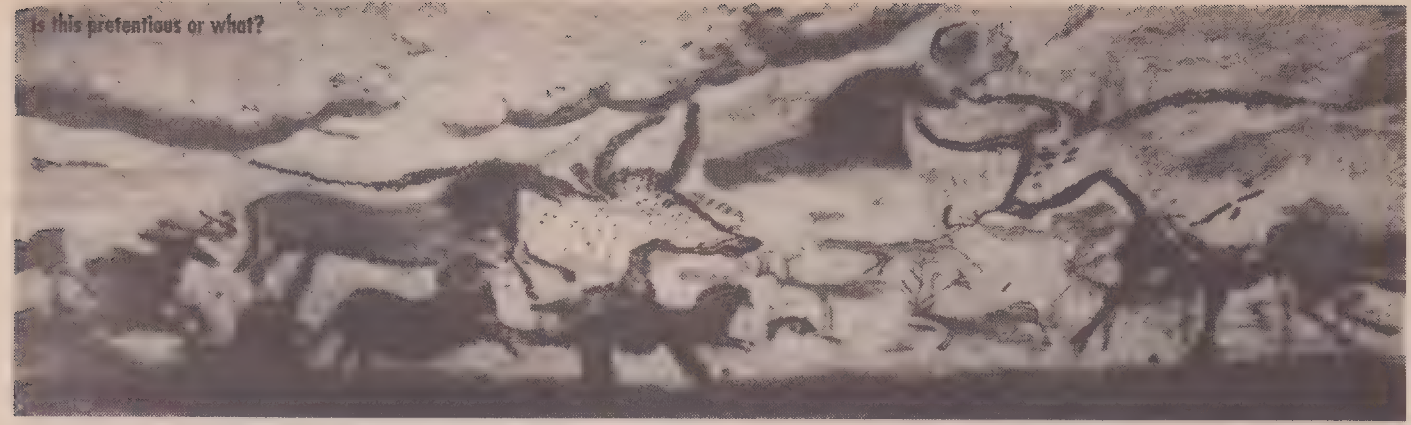

is this pretentious or what?

"It is common knowledge that revolutions are not made by professional politicians, especially not in these parts. Politicians tend to return when things are stabilized enough to tell who is winning. It is the writers, the poets, the artists, who are likely to be at the forefront." —Istvan Orosz, Art As Activist

STREET POSTERING:

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL OPPRESSION

BY SAINT TERESA STONE
INTRODUCTION BY PAUL IANNONE

The political changes that began in France in 1789 were spurred by a new force in political action. The European invention of the printing press had led to graphic expressions of political sentiment on every street corner, pictures and words hanging in space like a continuous riot or an endless cry to arms. The walls of the street echoed the revolutionary climate, the political tension, the violent passion of class struggle and the revolt against repression. Handbills and posters, tracts and books appeared in the hands of the people, spreading reams of "unfavorable views."

While the Bolsheviks were using posters to foment change in Russia, Diego Rivera was developing the political mural in the US, and the Labor Union Movement was carrying placards on picket lines, a kind of postering-in-motion. The power of street media wasn't lost on the Nazis and the other Axis powers, whose posters depicted their enemies as animals, their leaders as demigods -- exactly as the Allies depicted them in turn. And postering drove the industrial machine into feverish munitions production, aided by the recently synthesized wonder-drug, Amphetamine.

After the war, patriotism and the postwar era were reflected in the poster-like painting style of Norman Rockwell. Victorious (and strung out) Americans and Europeans turned their attentions homeward to an virtual opium cloud of game shows and valium dreams of peace. Yet, during the Fifties and Sixties, television threatened to displace the street as the forum for political unrest, scaring the culottes off the media aristocracy. But like the "organized" press, the TV remained under corporate control, and the crisis was averted. Television itself is perhaps the *sine qua non* anti-political experience, a medium of rampant consumerism, while the poster and the demonstrations it fosters remained raw expressions of the aware community. In 1968, the "free" world watched passively as reports of the "Prague Spring" filtered through their living-rooms. Czechoslovakian student unrest, spurred by posters depicting a Kremlin painted in blood, the lair of greedy demons, exploded into full-scale demonstrations.

The groundswell of change has continued, nearly without pause, into the present. For example, the "Democracy Wall Movement" in the China of 1978 was a dangerous experiment in social freedom, a backlash to the horrors of their "Cultural Revolution." Breaking free of totalitarian social control, thousands of posters appeared spontaneously in the middle of Beijing, expressing every conceivable complaint. At first the government stood by, stunned politicians staring into the giant eye of the TV as their political dreams unravelled. Deng Xiaoping announced that the right to put up posters would be stripped from the Chinese constitution, blaming "a handful of reactionaries with ulterior motives" for undermining China's "stability and unity" and plans for economic development, echoing the repressive reasonableness of governments everywhere. Plain-clothes police tore down the posters, arresting the activists, and dismissing their political opposition as enemies of the people. The official message was clear: freedom was an anomaly.

Often only posters serve as the alternative message. But, as much as posters and other visual means of political communication have been a potent method of political change, they have become the method of the status quo as well. Posters have often been acquired by the elite as nothing more than an "art form" -- any message lost to complacency. The logical endpoint of the counter-revolution is the poster's powerful big brother, the billboard. Small wonder that grafitti grows like mold on the walls of the repressive city. It is the last gasp of identity, in a world owned by corporate names.

Handbills and street postering are the poor man's press. Perhaps the primary political purposes that postering needs to uphold in our time is the act itself, the space-taking and space-holding.

Freedom of the press is granted only to those who own one. —A J Liebling

Chris Crass

Behind the Orange Curtain in Orange County, California, The United Anarchists Front has been watched very closely by the police due to their "No Pig Zone" posters. Here is an interview with Chris Crass of the UAF in Whittier, who, along with "Skot Steppenwolf", was ticketed for postering...

The "No Pig Zone" was just a community poster exemplifying police brutality shortly after the Rodney King attack. It was a community awareness poster [relaying the message that people should] take back the community and take matters into their own hands. We talked to a police officer and he said that postering on telephone poles was completely legal. Because we thought it was legal, we put our P.O. Box on the the posters and started putting 'em up on telephone poles.

When we started postering, the telephone company didn't like it – I guess garage sales and things like that which pose no threat and serve no purpose as far as communication goes are fine — but once you start postering something political, or social awareness, it becomes a problem. [Note: The telephone company distributes a brochure concerning postering which states that it's not allowed, claiming that staples, nails, etc. put holes in the insulating gloves worn by the telephone workers when they climb the poles. They do not explain the difference between a garage sale poster and a politically oriented poster, and why one should effect a workers gloves more-so than the other.] They contacted the police department, which started an investigation into the United Anarchist's Front because they weren't really familiar with what it was. They just heard the word Anarchist, so they kinda freaked out. We weren't getting mail for about a month and then all of a sudden, at the end of the month we'd get a large amount of mail with a lot of past-dated stamps on the envelopes, and some of the stuff was opened. I can't really say it was the police, but with an investigation going on, it made sense.

I talked to someone else who knew more about city ordinances and city laws, and he said that the police don't really know the laws very well and that postering – on telephone poles, really anywhere, unless it's a specified postering area – is illegal unless it's for garage sales or a lost pet. As soon as you have some sort of slogan or just anything that actually might create some thought, it becomes a problem.

Was this your first poster?

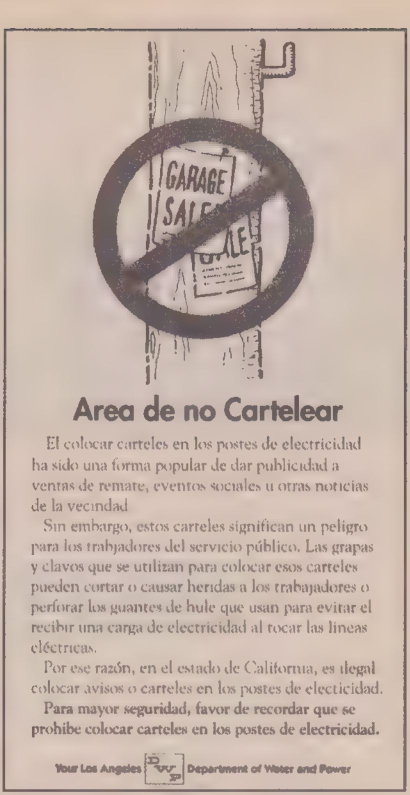
We had done some other posters that we just mailed out, but we were just trying to find an effective way to convey ideas through a somewhat legal means.

Do you plan to make more posters?

We've been making posters and distributing them either through the mail, through other organizations, placing them on bulletin boards, or just handing 'em out. As far as postering with glues on telephone poles, we'd kinda like to avoid that.

Did anybody get busted?

No. It turned out to be okay. It was just kind of like a warning. It's just a really strange thing because there's no real definition of what you can or can't post. Obviously, anything that's against the status quo is not too hip. It is kind of a hard thing to grasp in a country where we're supposed to have freedom of speech, politics and choice. I'm not sure how it is in L.A. and other places as far as postering. There are some places where it's legal.


GARAGE SALE
SALE

Area de no Cartelear

El colocar carteles en los postes de electricidad ha sido una forma popular de dar publicidad a ventas de remate, eventos sociales u otras noticias de la vecindad

Sin embargo, estos carteles significan un peligro para los trabjadores del servicio público. Las grapas y clavos que se utilizan para colocar esos carteles pueden cortar o causar heridas a los trabajadores o perforar los guantes de hule que usan para evitar el recibir una carga de electricidad al tocar las lineas eléctricas.

Por ese razón, en el estado de California, es ilegal colocar avisos o carteles en los postes de electicidad.

Para mayor seguridad, favor de recordar que se prohibe colocar carteles en los postes de electricidad.

Your Los Angeles DWP Department of Water and Power

Bob Z.

As the East tasted liberation during the 1980's, we in America -- Land of the Free -- were experiencing unprecedented repression from the Reagan-Bush regime. BOB Z., musician, editor of the zine *Bad Newz*, and posterist was fined nearly $22,000 for "littering," ie: for postering in Manhattan. [Interview by Teresa and Darby]

I wasn't gonna let the fine slide. A lot of people said that I should just split town. I was taught from day one in school that this country is the, "Land of the Free". More free than anywhere else in the world right? And, in the back of my mind somewhere, I always believed, at least on some level, that yeah, this is a real libertarian country compared to the rest. I was working my ass off to help other people put together shows where nobody was making any money but at least there was some real communication going on between people. And what did I get for my troubles? Uncle Sam trying to take everything I own, and maybe the next five years wages on top of that. Cops were calling my house, undercover, trying to gather information. These were the same pigs that appeared in court because I recognized their voices. They pretended to be private people interested in the shows that were going on and they were priming me to get as much information as they could.

And these were just show posters, not even political posters or anything?

That's right. There was nothing on them that anyone could misconstrue as offensive. They were simple show announcements.

Did they consider it equivalent to graffiti?

They argued that the city was going to hell and the papers that people were pasting up on lampposts were garbage. They felt that we needed garbage police to administer this, implying that people who poster are litterers.

Don't they have the right to think it's an eyesore for the community?
Well, they have about as much right as Adolph Hitler did in 1933. The first thing he did when he came to power was outlaw street postering. When you take away the ability to communicate between grass-roots people, people who don't have any forum whatsoever, you effectively silence the public. That's the reason I took it upon myself, really, and it was an enormous sacrifice to fight this, because I had to try and mobilize a lot of different people and arouse interest on this issue. But a lot of people just don't want to hear about it and don't want to be bothered. I had to become an activist to fight this thing.

What about that organization, Stop-Gro?
Right. "Stop Prosecuting Grass Roots Organizers." Fortunately, having been involved in the music scene for a while, having known a lot of people who did shows, a lot of people right away thought that what they did to me was really stupid. People started talking. And New York happens to be a place like L.A., there's a lot of media, and I tried to get the word out as much as possible. Most of the people who do street postering don't have the money to take out ads in the newspaper. Sheldon Leffler, the yuppie newspaper asshole, wanted to eliminate street postering because he saw it as competition. He figured if he could turn that off as a channel of communication, it would force people to take out advertising space in his newspaper.

Postering is really the only alternative people with no money have to get their word out.
It's the cheapest, quickest way to reach as many people as possible. It is important especially to bands who don't have any money to advertise. It's very crucial to have that avenue open as a way to reach people and let them know about a show. Other than word of mouth, what are you going to do?

How long were you fighting this? What were the twists and turns, and what was the outcome?
It was a completely insane process. Now, I'm primarily doing my own music, but at that time I was in a position to connect bands with venues and audiences. The posters were a part of that, which I had to curtail because if anybody saw the posters out on the street with my name on them, the cops would turn around and use them as evidence against me. I had to concentrate on fighting these assholes in the courts. They had this fine hanging over my head of $4,000 because 75 flyers were found on city property with my name on them. Four of these pigs came to my house one day and said, "Are you Bob Z?" and like an idiot I said yes. For anyone reading this article, if a cop comes and asks you your name, you never, ever tell them; don't tell them anything. Shut the door on them and tell them to go talk to your lawyer. If I had done that, I never would have gotten into this mess.

A few years ago, here in L.A., there was a time when clubs, especially the ones close to Beverly Hills and the Westside, were begging people, "Do not put our club's name on your flyer, we're getting fined for these things..."
That happened in New York too, they went after CBGB's and a few other places.

They don't have to see you do it? Your name on them is all the proof they need?
Well, that's a very, very important point to make, because that's how we fought them in the court. There's very little you can do if they catch you in the act of putting something up. In my case, they went after me and fined me for flyers that they saw with my name on them. They had absolutely no evidence that I had anything to do with these flyers and I maintained from day one that I didn't put any of these flyers up. I kept my story consistent throughout. I went through three or four different courts and I appealed every time until I got the decision we were looking for – they completely threw out the law they were using to prosecute people and rendered it unconstitutional on grounds of violation of the First Amendment, freedom of speech.

Did it set a precedent?
Yes. That courtroom decision threw out the postering statutes in New York that allowed the city to prosecute people for posters that had people's names on them. You cannot fine someone simply because their name is on a piece of paper on city property.

What about the guy who does the tile art on the lampposts [in NYC] and stuff? Do those people get fined too?
I haven't heard of any instances where those people were harassed. That doesn't mean that it doesn't happen. As far as the posters go, there never was a problem until the yups moved in, because they wanted everything to look like Beverly Hills or something. They wanted everything to look clean and nice. I'm happy to say, after this case, all the the assholes that did that to me, the sanitation police, including the sanitation commissioner, Brendan Sexton, are out of business. That was my great revenge, but I paid a price. I couldn't do what I do best for a bunch of years. I had to channel everything into this idiotic court case.

Is there some reason why they went after you so heavily? Were they using you as an example somehow?
There was an overzealous, dumbass sergeant, who was calling my house and pumping me for information. This was the big sting for him and he probably thought he was a great cop because of it. I think it was his decision; he saw that there were a lot of flyers up, got the information from me over the phone and found out I was sort of a nexus of activity. He administered all the tickets and sort of oversaw the whole operation. He probably figured if he slammed me good he could shut down a lot of stuff.

Then [Jello] Biafra found out about it and he alerted [Allen] Ginsberg. At the time, they both had cases concerning freedom-of-speech. Ginsberg's poem *Howl* was knocked off the air because of profanity. These guys had some of the best freedom-of-speech attorneys and when they found out about what was going on here, they put me in touch with some of these people. I had to sit down in a room with ten lawyers and explain to them what happened to me and find out if there was a case.

Some of these guys were from the ACLU and up to that point, I had already been in the administrative court, and tried to preserve as much of a record as possible. If you intend to fight something on constitutional grounds, it's called an Article 78, you have to make sure that you maintain your argument and your facts. The ACLU attorney who was helping Ginsberg on his FCC case took my case pro bono, which would have in excess of $10,000 if I had to pay the legal fees.

Is there any organization that's still around to help people fight postering laws, like Stop-Gro, especially someone with no money, who can't afford a lawyer?
When I started Stop-Gro I found a few freedom-of-speech attorneys who were too busy to do anything about it. There really wasn't any organization.

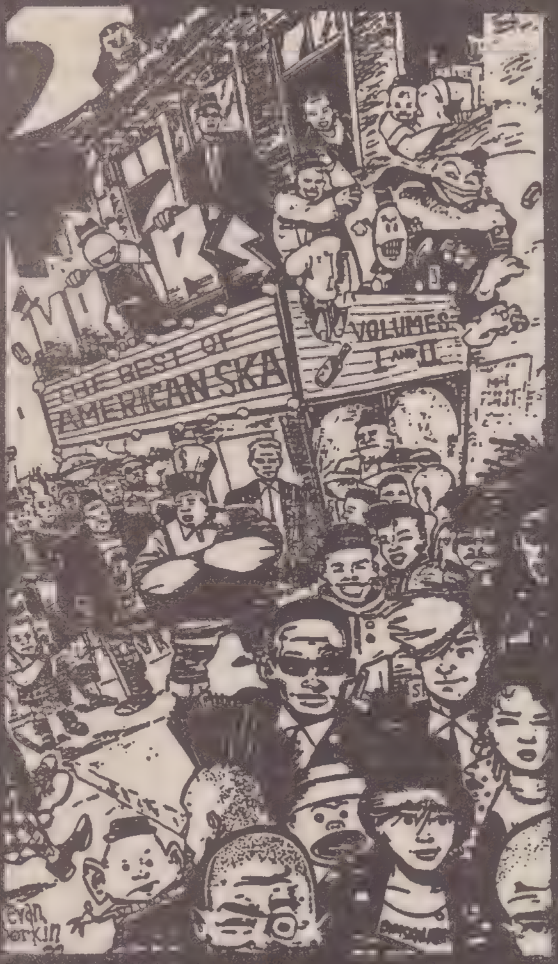
Do you still work with Stop-Gro?
Well, it's been a few years. I've heard of a few towns where they've had some oppression against posterers. It crops up every now and again, in Seattle, and New Haven, Connecticut, and some small towns, but these things tend to come and go and there seems to be no pattern to them. I'd share anything I have with someone who's in trouble and needs help. They can contact me and I'd be able to help them out based on my own experience. I have copies of all the legal papers that were used to overturn this case and it's really, really important that the word gets out that this decision came down the pike legally, so other people who are faced with this do have recourse. Court usually turns out being really expensive, more expensive than the actual fines for postering.

Is there anything else you want to add?
There are compilations of street posters, especially pertaining to the music scene that are out and available. There was one in a slick format called *Instant Litter*, which was about Seattle, published about five years ago and I think there might have been a follow-up to that. Then there's a little miniature zine called *Flypaper*, which collects music street posters, the most creative ones they can find and they shrink 'em down and put 'em in mini-zine format; they've got some really good ones in there. There's also Ray-O-Zine Publications out of New York City and he's been collecting street flyers from New York and putting them out in a thing called *Zero-Graphic Warfare*. He collected about forty or fifty of the best flyers he could find from the late eighties.

There are people collecting them out there and documenting what goes on. Sort of a subculture within a subculture. Mostly people are creating these things just out of a necessity to get a message out. But beyond that there are people who do this as an art form; They make 'em very bizarre and weird, just like the music. That's the stuff that interests me.

Don't say it – spray it. -Graffiti slogan

MASHIN' UP The NATION!



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6 FEET UNDER • Bloomfield, CT
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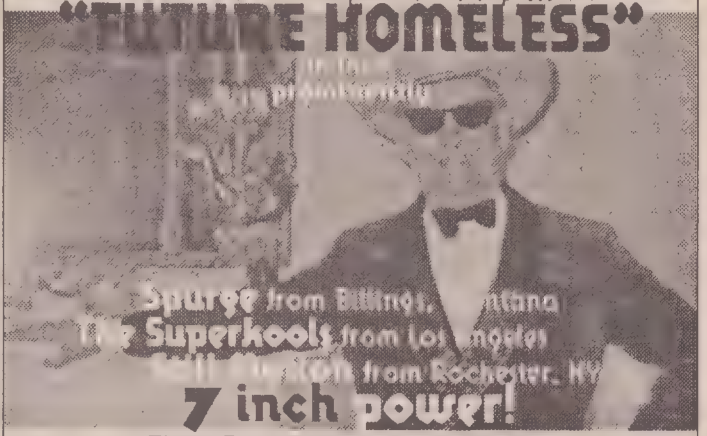

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Robbie Conal

POST
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Some posterists get caught and harrassed, others pay for sanctioned space. ROBBIE CONAL, probably the most visible street posterist, and certainly the most famous to come out of Los Angeles in the eighties, seems to get away with it somehow:

In terms of a sanctioned form of communication or a form of minor civil disobedience, postering probably is one of the most flexible forms of public communication — in any urban environment. One of the reasons it's so interesting is that the meaning is altered by the placement of the poster. If I were to take a poster of the Pope picking his nose and put it up on Catholic churches around Los Angeles, it would mean one thing. If I took the same poster and put it up on switching boxes for traffic lights, it would have a little different meaning. If I took the same poster and put it in sanctioned spaces for commercial address, such as bus shelters, back-lit and paid for, it would mean something else. It's much more aggressive placed directly on a Catholic church than in a space that's sanctioned for commercial address. However, no city agency or private corporation that was contracted by the city would actually let a person put an image like that up in a sanctioned space for advertising. I've had problems like that myself with billboard spaces. It pretty much made me vow never to do anything legal again.

Do you ever get caught?

I always get caught. I've never been arrested. There are a couple of reasons for that. Part of that is serendipity and luck and the other part of it is very much by design and also because I'm white. Which I understand is part of the mix. There's a layer of my art that's all about class and race issues, because I do so many ugly old white men in suits and ties who have a lot of power over the universe. People who aren't ugly old white males are disempowered.

I try and get everybody to do the best they can to be courteous and civil with the police or anybody else they meet on the streets for that matter. We gather in all-night coffee houses around the country and I tell everyone my version of guerilla postering tactics before we go out. Our objective is an alternative means of distribution of text and graphics that represent ideas about issues that we think are important. Getting arrested could spoil your whole evening. We do whatever the cops say. Maybe we'll tell them it's an art project we're doing for school and dad is driving the car. We'll take 'em down if they want us to, get the hell outta their neighborhood and go somewhere where their squad car will never see us again.

Since your work is more visible now, do you think they know what you're up to? That it's not an art project for school?

Well, I was making a joke about that particular line. However, they have a very difficult job and everyone understands that a certain amount of law enforcement on the street is necessary. We just wish it would be humane, which is kind of unheard of in Los Angeles. They should have more important things to do than hassle us on the streets.

There's another tactic that could be useful at times that isn't mine, of actually inciting law enforcement to arrest you, and then using that process as a form for further explication of your critique.

Have you ever gotten some sort of reprimanding memo or something?

Oh sure, I had a big to-do with the Public Works Dept. in Los Angeles in 1988 because they were on public property. Luckily, I have a great lawyer, I'm white, and I had enough visibility so that a confrontation with city bureaucracy over my wild postering would make it look like Goliath is chasing David around the city in the middle of the night and make them look pretty bad.

Wild postering is politics, not just art about politics. As long as people who do it are conscious that they're basically playing politics, they should play smart politics and think out their moves, especially if the object is to communicate with the general public and not just get themselves off. That's part of it. I'm an artist so at least half my motivation for anything I do is, I think it looks cool.

What is the difference between graffiti and postering?

I'm sympathetic to graffiti to the point of being empathetic. I know that young people – who are exiled to very mean streets by a government that has systematically dismantled federal, state and city social welfare and education programs where they're most needed for the last 12 years – have very few options. They are invisible to our government. This is a definition of disenfranchisement. Tagging is a way of both screaming out that you exist, by putting your name everywhere, and also expressing hostility to a mainstream political structure that denies your existence. I can appreciate someone putting their name on public property in violation of municipal codes, but I think that there's another level. The next level of expression from a primal scream of "I exist!" and "Fuck you!" is perhaps a *sentence* about an issue that really bugs you. Be a little more articulate than just your tag. Then it gets interesting.

I always get caught. I've never been arrested. There are a couple of reasons for that. Part of that is serendipity and luck and the other part of it is very much by design and also because I'm white.

If serious graffiti writers ever wanted to get a wall and do a masterpiece, an extravaganza, ironically there is city money for that. Especially right now, the cultural affairs department is wildly interested in co-opting another so-called riot (laughs). There is money for people with talent to make art about the situation in Los Angeles. But the city doesn't just bestow grants on people, you have to sit down and write out a grant and make seven copies of each page that you write and it's a whole deal. It would take a little help to actually write the grant.

Did you have a grant to get you started?

Never permit strangers, especially men, to buy drinks for you on a train or in a terminal. –Amy Vanderbilt

Oh no. My work has nothing to do with grants. I'm all for artists getting money any way they can, y'know, artists need it, so just take it when it's offered or go after it, but part of the granting idea – for artists like me – is to get us *off* the streets and bring us more into the mainstream rather than doing non-sanctioned public art that's so illegal and irritating to them.

But if a young artist was struggling and wanted to get a grant...

This is politics. The city is not gonna give you money to say what I had to say about Darryl Gates. It's not gonna give a graffiti writer money to say what he or she has to say about what they think about the public education system in Los Angeles. If you want money from a granting institution, whether it's a private person or a corporation or a public institution, you have to understand that you're entering into a relationship that affects the content of your production. You just have to bear that in mind.

You have to compromise.

It can involve compromise. You have to be shrewd if you want to receive money from granting institutions. You have to slice your irony a little thinner. Now, I'm not gonna go to the California Council on the Arts with an image of Pete Wilson as a Mouseketeer and ask them to fund it. I'm just gonna go do it any way I can.

PHOTO BY: DON LEWIS

CONAL'S RECENT "DIS ARM" POSTER – WHICH WAS ENDORSED BY A NUMBER OF LOS ANGELES RAPPERS AND SOUTH-CENTRAL BASED COMMUNITY GROUPS – INSPIRED LA COUNTY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH TO CALL FOR A PROBE TO DETERMINE IF CHARGES CAN BE FILED AGAINST THE ARTIST FOR "ILLEGALLY" POSTING ON PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PROPERTY. ANTONOVICH MAINTAINS THE POSTER "GLORIFIES VIOLENCE."

ART
ATTACKS
AIDS
NO GLOVE NO LOVE

PHOTO BY: DON LEWIS

MIKE MCNEILLY, "LETHAL ART", PAYS BIG BUCKS TO SPREAD HIS MCPOLITICAL MCART ALL OVER THE BUS BENCHES AND BUILDINGS IN LOS ANGELES.

So was most of your work done on your own dime?

It is rare that I actually do something with or for a organization or get money from anybody to do it. My advice for somebody who wants to do a critical non-sanctioned poster project, is to keep it modest and design it so that you can get it done. Make it small, make it do-able and *get it up*. Maybe the next one will be a little bigger and will save the world. Being resourceful doesn't mean compromising your ideas or your expressions, it just means scrounging materials and maybe using Xerox copy machines, using black and white as opposed to color which is more expensive for multiple copies. Every design trick costs more money. That's why my stuff usually looks so dumb. It's a matter of economics. I use offset litho so I go to a printer and each new complexity in my design is an upcharge. Simple is the way to go if you have shallow pockets.

What do you think about that "Lethal Art" guy?"

He's got deep pockets. But it's great to have another pictorial voice on the streets addressing issues that are important and taking away space from advertisements for alcohol and cigarettes. I think one of the things about guerrilla postering is that it's not giving the streets to advertisers of commercial products. It's taking back the streets for public expression about issues that are important to all of us as opposed to kissy-poo products that we don't need and are probably harmful to us.

Is he sponsored by someone?

No, it's his money. He throws down a lot of bucks and I appreciate what he's doing. His art is more exhortative and less directly critical than mine. I think the more the merrier. I love the Guerrilla Girls. I consider them to be like my sisters. I love WAC, Women's Action Coalition. I think the more adversarial and alternative expression on the streets the better.

Whoever reads this [*Ben Is Dead*] – people in shredded black things – I'm sure they've got plenty of ideas about what's going down, but don't have access to mainstream forms of communication. Like they're not gonna get on TV or into the *Los Angeles Times* or even the *LA Weekly* for that matter, so I think postering is one of the most surprisingly efficacious forms of public address for people who are disenfranchised and not necessarily beneficiaries of the system.

Postering as a form of communication...

Exactly. It works and I'm a living example. I'm still startled by it. I can't believe that so many people are actually fucking interested in it. I did it because I was pissed off and because I wanted to make art a more populist form. I wanted to communicate with the general public and not from within friendly confines of the hunky-dory art establishment. It's worked beyond my wildest expectations and there are reasons for it that have nothing to do with me, reasons such as 12 years of Republican rule, and political and economic conditions that I and a lot of other people were upset about.

Who were you influenced by?

Oh lots of people...I don't like to mention them because there are so many people who have influenced me. John Hartfield is a great German agit-prop artist – the Darryl Gates poster was an homage to him. There was a show at the LA county museum called "Outsider Art," and this is kind of like political outsider art, adversarial art by people who don't agree, or are left out or disenfranchised from all the benefits of a system that is structured for the wealthy few. I think it's hubris for – say an artist – to make art with the goal of changing people's minds about issues that they really care about. I feel like it's almost incumbent on me to do that as a citizen, and to use a sense of humor to skewer people who I think are abusing their power in our name. Things would just be too grim without the joke. I would never try it without a little bit of humor.

I don't just do all this stuff myself. I developed a production team to translate the paintings into posters and I have a designer and photographer. I have about eight people who're involved in actually making the posters and of course we have hundreds of people who are involved in helping distribute them, and I want to give them credit. This is kind of a Huck Finn/Tom Sawyer type of activity where you have an idea get all your friends to help you with whatever talents they have to bring it to life and you try to talk them into it, y'know "you're really gonna love going out there in the middle of the night in one of the most dangerous areas in the universe and splattering yourself with glue..."

The trouble with our age is that it is all signpost and no destination. –Louis Kronenberger

Frank Kozik

PHOTO BY: SAMANTHA DESHONS

FRANK KOZIK definitely has his own outspoken politics, although he produces posters that are primarily dominated by music.

When did you first begin making posters?

I had a few really pathetic efforts back about 1981 or '82. I used to do a lot of mail art. My mail art friends moved here and we made weird little posters to put up on the street, and a few really lame punk rock posters for really lame shows back then. I started doing it in earnest about 1989.

This issue's theme is about communication...

That's my whole thing with the posters. My challenge is to make the poster as simple as possible, yet communicate a lot of information, to make my posters with as few elements as possible and see if people understand them. I'm fascinated with the communication aspect of it, like, somebody driving down the street in a car can look out their window and instantly know the message. I don't know if you've seen a lot of my stuff, but I like to go for big letters in black and bright colors, real simple layouts.

Were you influenced by anybody?

In the 1970s, the British division of Ballantine books put out these really cheaply done war books and they had this really cool art direction with black pages and white letters, and simple, black and white photographs. That had a lot of influence on me. I'm into really exploitative American advertising from the forties and fifties, and porno mags and stuff from back then; they'd have these really crazy over-the-top kinda illustrations. I like a lot of artists, but I'm not a great illustrator or painter. I'm into inadvertently cool, mainstream images. I collect old typography books and old advertising books, really generic, but stylish stuff.

I noticed in your posters a Japanese comics influence...

I'm really into bold graphics and fascinated with old Japanese magazine covers, they're incredibly beautiful. It doesn't even matter what it is – it could be a golf magazine – but the cover is the most astounding thing you'll ever see.

What inspires you now?

I don't know, I've just amassed this like, insane morgue of bizarre paper goods, a whole room with all my stuff filed away in it. I'll just sit there and look through these old, like, girlie mags and all this weird shit I've collected over the years. Every time I look at something it gives me a million ideas. I rarely sit down and draw an entirely original thing. I will find something that I can mutate, or regurgitate. Any time I pick up anything visual, it gives me an idea for something. I'm one of those people that whenever a song comes on the radio I have to make up a fake song.

Alternative lyrics...

That's how I do my posters. Sort of like this retard fucking with everything I see. I think that's why it's popular, because the stuff in the posters is familiar, but it's been twisted. I fuck with the Flintstones a lot so I got a call from Hanna Barbara. They were really nice about it though. The *CEO* called me.

Really?

Yeah. He said, "Look, we've seen the magazines, we've seen all the stuff around. They want me to sue you. I understand, I used to have an art gallery. This is really funny, good work but I have to ask you to stop." Then he asked, " Do you have this one and this one?" He wanted all these posters! He was actually a really cool guy.

Do you go out postering?

When I was working at the club, I started doing posters and I would go out and put them up. Around here, it's against the law and there was a war for a while with these old ladies who wanted to clean up the streets, but the cops don't really hassle you.

Has anyone ever tried to censor you?

Oh yeah, all the time, sure. A lot of people are freaked out.

Because of the subject matter?

People have a hard time dealing with male frontal nudity. I'm always accused of being blatantly violent, sexist and weird, stuff that's really insane. If you look at my work, I'm into inference; the poster might *suggest* something, but it's not actually *depicted* because I think that a person's imagination is much more perverted than anything I could ever come up with.

It's not your fault that they have vivid imaginations...

I've had stuff censored for no reason. There was a poster I did up in Dallas that was a black and white picture of this dead girl. She looked really beautiful and it wasn't really obvious she was dead unless you looked at it closely. The press up there freaked out, and said that it was obviously a dead Jewish girl, that I must be a Nazi, and it was nothing of the sort. It was a picture of a Russian peasant girl.

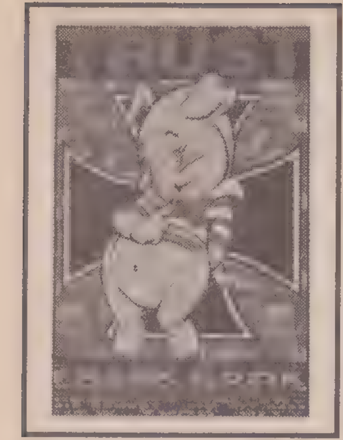
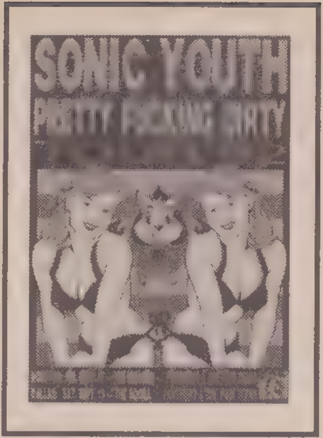
They read into it...

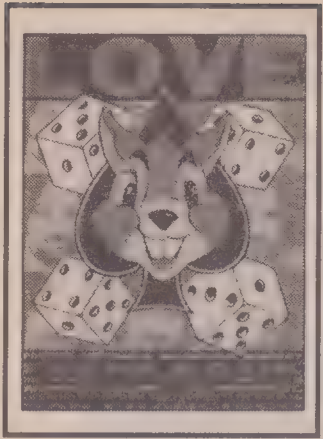
Yeah, weird shit like that. I did a poster for Houston with an traditional image of the Virgin Mary, except she was a hermaphrodite with tattoos and shit. It was a Jane's Addiction poster, and that really freaked people out. They said things like, "Well, that's okay that you're showing her tits, but why is there a dick on this poster?" People have a real hard time with male nudity.

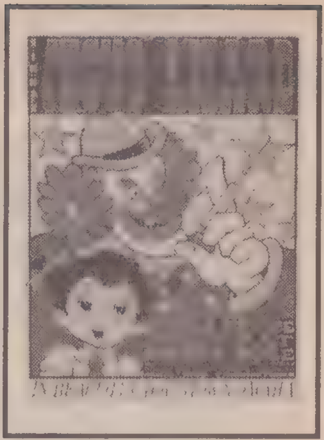
If there was something you'd want to communicate to people, what would it be?

I think, especially in this country, it's true, you can be and do whatever you want to, I think that everybody who's got a functioning brain and two hands can learn or do anything they wanna do, and I think a lot of people are scared to do anything. There are too many choices, and this is gonna sound really conservative but I think people need to learn how to work and how to actually do real things. I'm not really into people who run around claiming, "I'm a poet" and "I'm a conceptualist". If you want to improve your life you should take steps to do it. Don't sit around and wait for somebody to walk in the door and say, "Hey, you look really cool in those Docs, we'll give you money to do whatever you want." Unfortunately with the whole music industry and entertainment industry, people are losing the fact it's just an illusion. They think real life's gonna be like that. Then when they get out of school they find out that real life can suck real bad. Then they all become alcoholics and junkies and shit. I think people need to stop watching so much television and just *do* more things.

I think that people have a hard time communicating because they hide themselves behind a lot of layers. I think most of it has to do with self-consciousness and self-protection. I think people would be a lot better off if they were up front about things. I think that people need to actually communicate more and not be so worried about what other people think. In the long run, you're gonna be fuckin' dead and no one's gonna even know





you ever were alive, and why not maximize what you have *now*.

I've been doing a bit of research and I went to the library and got a lot of books about the Russian revolution, and most recently, the Berlin Wall...

We don't really have the poster thing over here, but I grew up in Europe where everything is postering, and there are poster kiosks on the street. I think it's a really effective form of communication; show attendance goes up when there are posters on the street. Los Angeles is so big and fucked-up that I guess it's kind of impossible, but here in Texas there is a lot of poster activity going on.

The biggest poster activity we have out here is that guy Robbie Conal. He did the *Women With Teeth* and *Men With No Lips*...

Oh yeah, but he's living off of a government grant. I've got no respect for that guy. If I was getting money like that, I'd drive around and put up posters all day too.

When you were growing up you saw a lot of political...

I grew up in a fascist country [Spain]. If you didn't care about freedom of religion or speech it was a great place to live. It was really safe, no crime, everybody had a job. People here complain about the cops. The cops here [in the U.S.] are nuthin', it's a joke compared to what they're like in other countries. I mean, I grew up with cops with machine guns on every corner....

Madrid is a large city. It's a city like New York with maybe only three or four million people living in it and maybe 12 newspapers. Here, every town's got like *one* newspaper, and if you want to know what's going on you look in the paper, right? Well over there it's not like that, it's structured so you're dependent on what you see on the street. Posters are the method they use to transcend class boundaries. Somebody can't afford to advertise in twenty different newspapers, but you can put up posters and *everybody* sees the poster, whereas maybe only a certain kind of person would buy the newspaper you wanted to advertise in. That's one reason why the poster thing was so big over there.

And anyone can understand a poster.

Right.

There are a few other artists imitating your work.

A couple of years ago, I was working with an outfit out there in Los Angeles, up in the Valley, and the promise of returns never came through. I broke with them and started working with their main competitor, and I'm treated well. The first outfit got someone to completely mimic what I'm doing. They're doing the same sort of silk screen format, the same kind of graphics, same kind of lettering, same sizes. Anybody using that same simple format is going to produce work like mine, these really generic products. There are three or four people following my format, but I don't care. It's up to me to do a better one next time to counter it. It's competition. But one guy is doing it solely for rip-off commercial purposes.

And these guys were people you worked with before?

There's this woman who doesn't know anything about the music, she's just an art gallery owner type. I was working with her, and she just went out and found this professional commercial artist guy who's aping my style.

He's like an impostor.

It sucks, and it's not because he's copying my style. I could care less about that. The posters are frauds. Which is a silly thing to be worried about but it's my livelihood. You know what I'm sayin? It's like if somebody put out a magazine like *Ben Is Dead*, 'cuz *Ben Is Dead* is gettin' really popular, right? So what if somebody completely copies your format, and it was somebody who had no connection to the culture you're writing about but is just in it for the money. The gallery people aren't producing the work for the music, they're not putting up the posters or anything, they're just being sold.

Someone told me that at the Bikini Kill show they weren't even giving band members free posters.

Yeah, they're just being sold. I mean, they don't even have the good grace to actually use them for what they're supposed to be used for. Every time I do a poster, a couple of hundred people are gonna get to swipe one for free from a pole somewhere and I'm really into that...I do original epics too, acrylic paintings and I do wax pencil pieces. They're the fancier things I sold in the gallery situation. I really don't like doing that. I like to see my stuff reproduced. I'm into the fact that there are these really weird objects that are produced in quantity. Doing one piece is really nice, it's fun to work on while you're doing it, but then you sell it for some money that disappears instantly. I like getting a lot of money for a piece, but at the same time, I have a problem with it. I do these art shows and there's always these gallery people who don't understand that if the posters are fifteen dollars, they'll sell a lot. Young kids, into alternative music, are not like rich art collector people.

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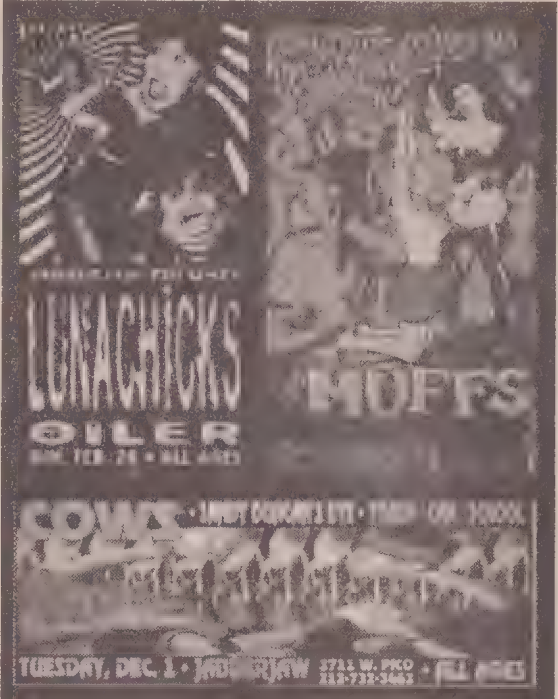

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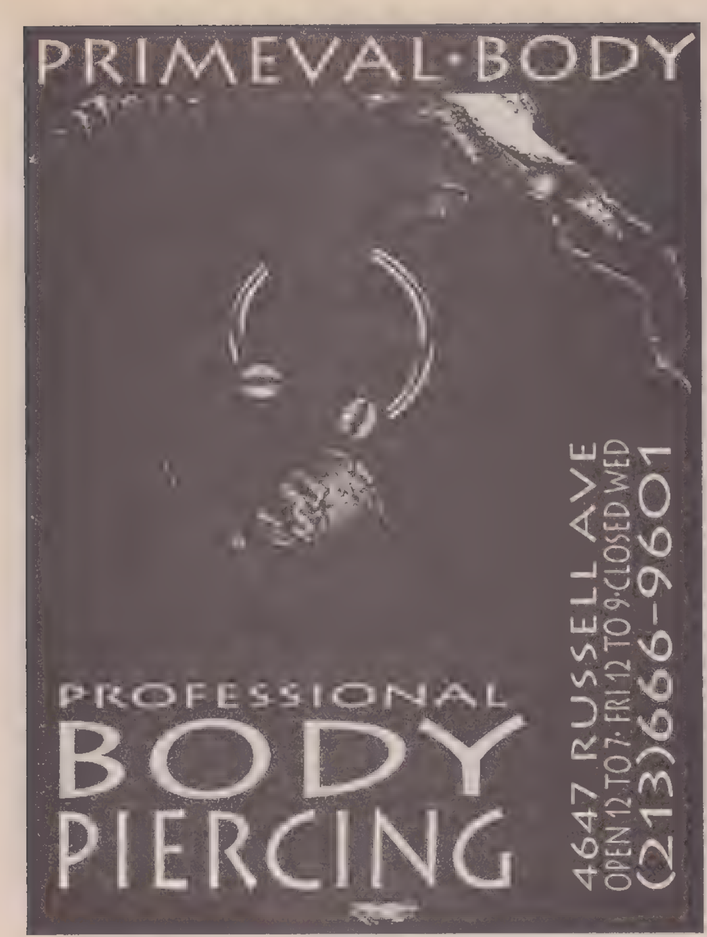

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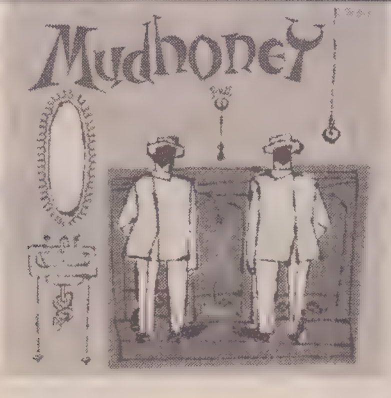

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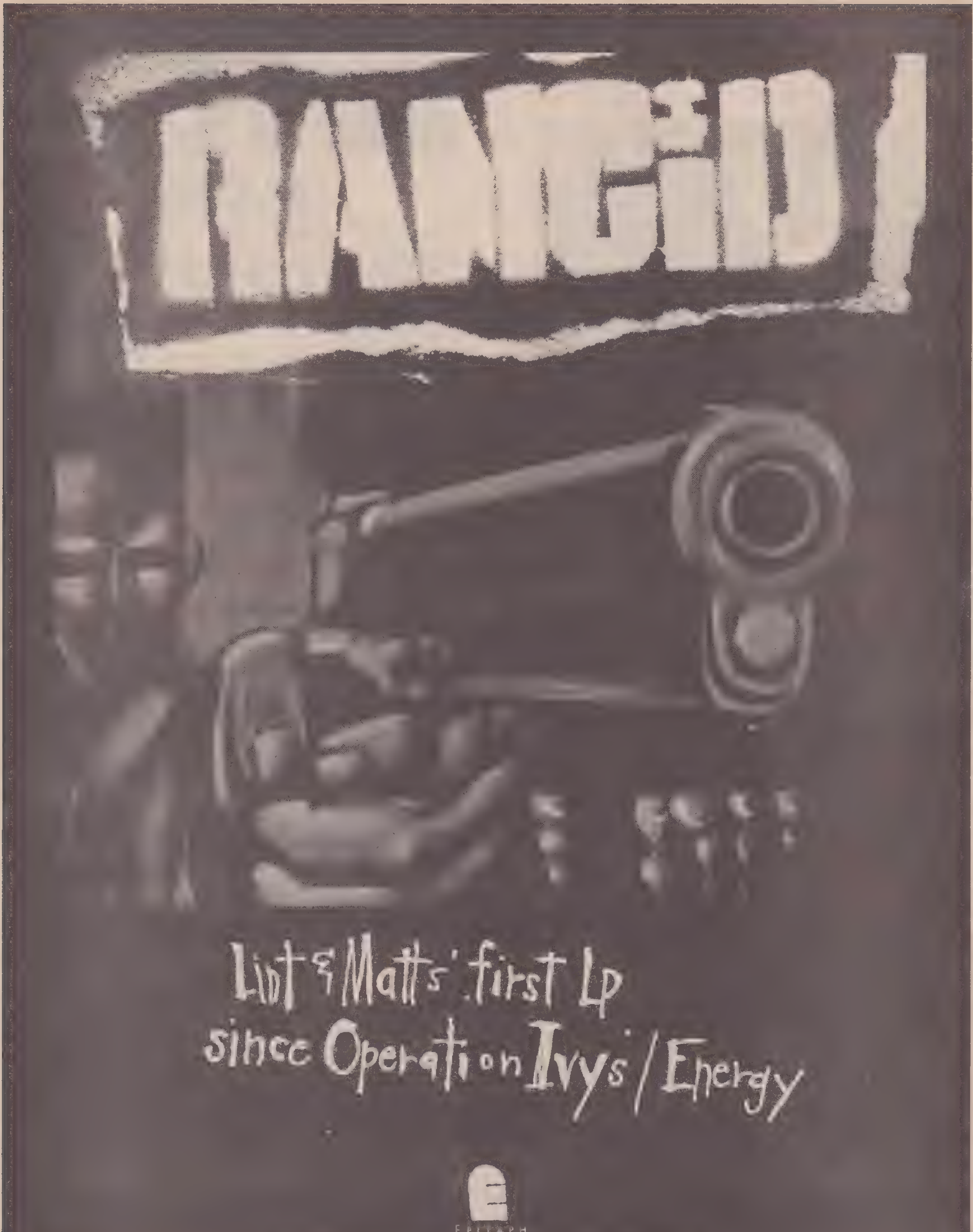
—Paul Iannone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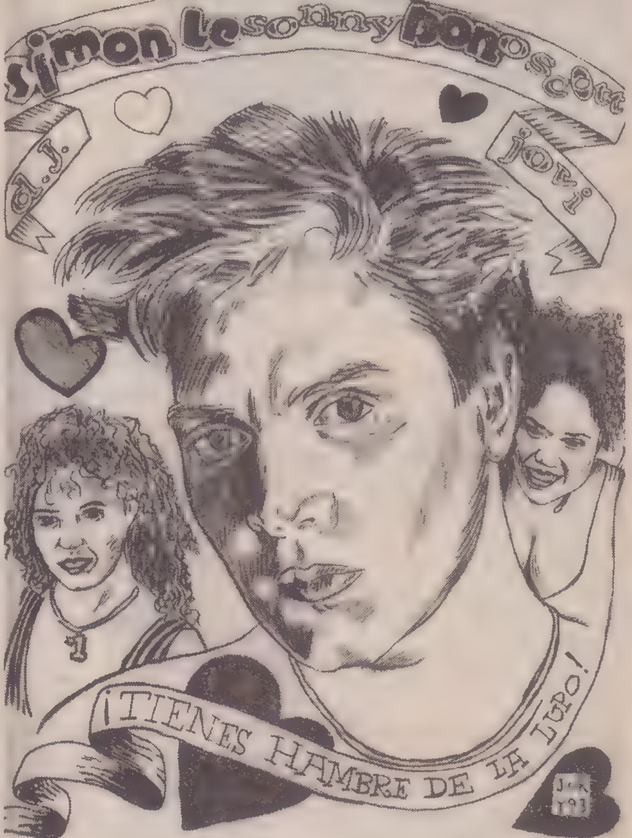
DINING ON PLANET EARTH:

KERIN AND DARBY MEET DURAN DURAN

Did you know that Simon LeBon wore yellow underwear? That John Taylor's nickname was Tigger, and Nick Rhodes loved strawberries? Probably not, but I knew. Kerin knew. A whole legion of us who were pubescent in the mid eighties knew. Somewhere between 1982 and 1985, we just lost our heads. I couldn't get enough issues of Star Hits, the magazine with THE best pictures... couldn't get enough limited edition picture discs with B-sides from Japan, and couldn't hang enough pictures of Simon on my wall. I had all their albums, all their videos taped from MTV, all their "true" life stores ordered from some import place that charged me way too much. I can honestly chart my growth with important happenings in the life of the Durans. And for some of us, well hey, being a "Duranie" wasn't the coolest thing, but you must admit, they were cute. And who'd imagine they'd be around THIS long? Which is why, as I sit at my CMJ desk typing under my tattered Notorious poster, I take my fedora off to Kerin. Because she did something I'd still like to do... have lunch with Duran Duran. —Katy Krassner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DARBY AND KERIN MAKE A "SIMON SANDWICH"

Things were pretty loud from the moment Kerin's friend Susan, at STR publicity, asked her if she wanted to do an interview with Duran Duran. God, I couldn't hear the end of it. One of the things in my whole entire existence that I could care less about would have to be Duran Duran. Who cares about Duran Duran in 1993 – when only geeks (I beg to differ with you, Darby. Geek yourself! -Kerin) cared about them when they were hot shit anyway? But I was happy for Kerin, I mean, they were her teen idols and all. She not only had every record and teen magazine with their faces on them (even some European ones!) but she even admitted to having stationary made that said "From the Desk of Kerin Taylor" (as in John, of course). So when her old Duranie groupie friend Shelby (whom she met because they both had Duran t-shirts on) couldn't join her for the interview that day, Kerin practically went on all fours, begging me to go. The free meal won out over the bad condition I was in. I tried to air out my clothes really fast and I think I even washed my face – for Kerin of course. And we were only 45 minutes late. We zoomed down La Cienega in a borrowed car and an ounce of gas. We passed a guy with big ears in a small car to whom I yelled "Hey, you look like Doogie" and he smiled, just like Doogie. And we teetered the speed limit as we took the treacherous turns in the Beverly Connection parking lot. Unfortunately, my driving skills aren't always up to par when I'm stressed, but I only slightly damaged the other car, so we hit and ran to the restaurant. Some band members were there but I couldn't tell who was who amongst all the teen-type reporters... What were we doing here anyway? All I could think about was if I could actually let myself print an interview with Duran Duran and if I was ever going to figure out who was even in the band. I kept trying to sign [language] Kerin to ask her, to no avail. Those first minutes I spent speaking with their bodyguard while Kerin spent most of them ordering beers (I was really, really nervous —Kerin). Sort of as an ice-breaker Simon walked in and I was slightly relieved because I finally recognized one of them. He sat next to me... —Darby

Simon LeBon: Can I see a copy of your magazine?

Darby: You didn't get a Sex issue?

Nick Rhodes: That's the good one. I want to keep it.

Kerin: Go ahead!

S: [to Darby] What's that in your mouth?

D: It's a toothpick.

S. Is it mint?

D: No. It's Tea Tree Oil. You look really drunk, are you?

S: No.

D: OK, I was just wondering. Maybe it's the look on your face – it has a drunken edge to it.

S: I spent such a long time drunk. [sniffs Darby's toothpick] Do I smell drunk?

D: You are drunk. You are drunk and you're lying. Go ahead and taste it [the toothpick].

S: Oh, I know why it looks so weird - it's got your lipstick all over it. It reminds me of... yeah, I've had shampoo that tastes like this... I'm not really a drinking man, actually.

D: What kind of man are you?

S: I'm a singer. I really love singing. I really love it. When I drink, I tend to drive into lampposts and things.

D: Watch. I can flip it in my mouth. [Darby twirls toothpick in mouth. Simon is very impressed]

S: Can you tie a knot in a cherry stem with your tongue?

D: No, but Kerin can. [to the waitress] Can we have some cherries, with stems?

K: No!

D: Yes! I showed him my [illegible]

S: [flipping through Gross issue] Is this your teen magazine?

K: It's not for teens.

S: No?

K: Maybe for really demented teens. There's the teen guy over there. He does Bop.

D: We're the mature, young adult and stuff magazine.

K: You shouldn't look through that one before lunch.

S: Is it painful? Is it pain and suffering?

D: Depends on where you've been and what bothers you.

S: Mutilation?

D: Yeah – there is.

S: Have you seen that Joel Peter Witkin photograph called "Testicles Stretched With Possibility of Crushed Face"? It's this guy lying down, with a leather mask with a zipper up it, and he's lying on an inclined ditch, head down there, and he's got a pulley up there and he's got this little metal thing around his bollucks and it's attached to a cable which goes up through the pulley and it meets above his head and comes down to this stage weight at the other end, right above his head. You know, "Testicles Stretched With Possibility of Crushed Face."

N: [looking at Gross interviews] Oh, Annie Sprinkle! I know her!

D: [illegible]

[illegible] Gross contents. Then Simon starts flipping through [illegible] points to one of the illustrations]

[illegible] It's giving me a bit of a hard on.

D: Oh, really?

S: Yeah. Do you like Madonna's book?

D: Actually, I just saw it. If those are her fantasies, they're a little tame, but...

S: Tame?

D: I think she could have gone a little farther. I mean, I fantasize about more hard-core stuff than that. Like the one in the gymnasium.

PHOTO: DARBY

AWESOME CHICK SUSAN

S: Oh yeah, the rape.

D: Yeah. She had like a smile on her face. It could have been a little more violent. I don't know. It would have been more exciting. But, I only glanced at it really fast.

S: Do you associate sex with violence?

D: No, only when I...

S: Fantasize?

D: Yeah.

S: Really? What, being hurt turns you on?

D: You shouldn't listen to this.

S: I'm interested. I'm really interested.

D: Yeah.

S: Really?

[waitress interrupts]

S: This looks really interesting. I mean, I haven't really read it. I'm looking at the pictures. I enjoy this type of magazine as opposed to things like Playboy or Penthouse. I don't like that old-fashioned, institutionalized, male dominated society that they all stand for. This is from a girl's point of view as well, which is what I really like. That's what I find so sexy about it. It's actually what girls find sexy about being girls. All those glossy ones, they all become so incredibly generic really.

[Kerin and I immediately think of all their girly videos]

S: You're going to put us in this, eh?

D: Yup.

S: Great. What are you going to put in?

D: Well, we're going to get some naked shots in the bathroom, that's what your publicist told us. The next issue is Modern Transmissions and Sensory Overload.

S: Like orgasms?

K: Kinda. See, I used to be a huge fan of yours when I was like 12 and 13 and the article's going to be written like...

S: Did you ever fantasize about us?

K: Who didn't?

D: I didn't.

K: Hey, listen, I had Duran Duran bedsheets.

D: There was one guy in the band I thought...

S: No, no, no. [to Darby] You did fantasize about being beaten up by us, right?

K: Um... I had this really cool one about John and me and an anaconda...

D: That was your fantasy?

K: Well, yeah. With it wrapping around, while we... you know.

D: Wow. I didn't even know that and she's my best friend. The things you learn. So tell us, Kerin...

K: No Darby.

D: No, please. Tell us about... have you had enough to drink?

K: No.

D: Tell us about your fantasies with Duran Duran.

K: I am not going to. This is only my second beer.

S: Let me get you a few more.

K: No, no, I'm OK.

S: No, really. Taste this, it's great.

K: I was going to bring you my Nite Romantics album to sign, but Susan said you'd be offended.

S: No. I'd be flattered. If you want to bring it over to the hotel, I'll sign it.

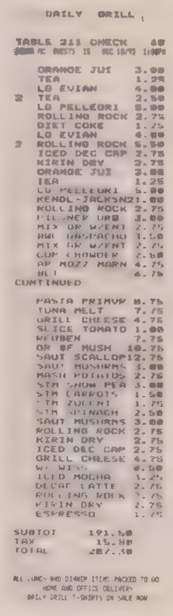
[We try to force feed Nick Rhodes some fried mozzarella. He gets scared. Simon asks Kerin to tie the cherry stem in a knot. She does it in 8 seconds flat. Everyone applauds.]

K: So, how long did you guys work on this album? It's your first one in awhile, right?

John: We started it two years ago.

K: I've noticed that the albums that take the longest are usually the ones that are best.

J: We just had to get this stuff out. I mean, before, when we first started, we had a lifetime to accomplish what we wanted. But then, all of a sudden, you have to start all over again, and this time you don't have a lifetime to do it. You have 18 months, and you have to retrain your thoughts. And then, it's time to do another one.



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THE RECEIPT

D: So is there anything else you've put out?

N: Not for about three years.

D: It seems like it's been more than three years. The last thing I heard was when I was in high school and that was long ago. Why did you decide all of a sudden to put out another record?

S: Suddenly? It wasn't sudden. Isn't that what every band does?

D: I know, but it's been so long.

S: You're right about that point. It was a long time. Things weren't going right, and so you wait until they do.

D: Are you happy with it?

N: Yes. I think it's great.

D: So, are they going to be able to play Duran Duran at rave clubs?

S: Yeah, oh yeah.

D: Are you going to be in magazines like *Teen Beat* again? We already know you're going to be in Bop.

K: Tiger Beat. They used to be in Tiger Beat.

S: Your magazine's called Bop, right?

D: Uh, no. That's the guy with Bop over there.

S: Ben is Bop?

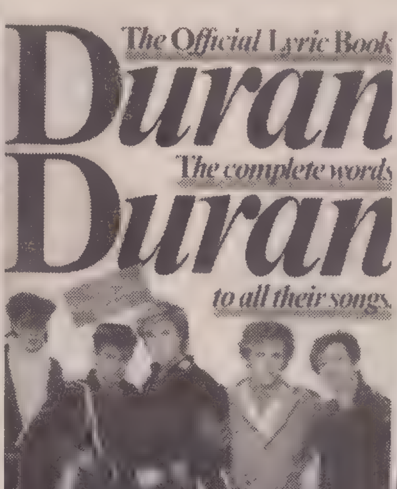
D: Ben Is Bop?

S: Your magazine is Ben. OK, where's Bop?

[at this point, it's pretty obvious that Simon is fucked up – if it's permanent or not is the question]

D: Over there.

S: We've actually got Bop and Ben. Boppin' Ben. It's like Bill and Ben. We have these two puppets in the UK, Bill and Ben. It's a children's TV show and they talk in this kind of funny baby talk. It's like "Blahdum blahdum blahdumdblur." And the joke is that Bill and Ben, the puppets, after they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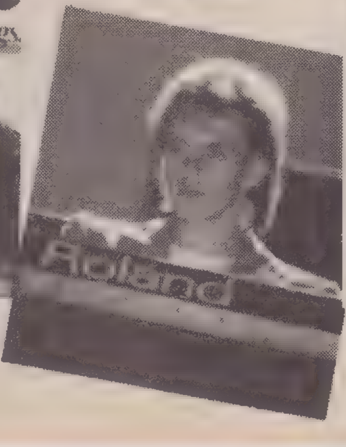


shoot their program, they go to a bar and have a couple of drinks. And Ben goes to Bill, "Blahdum blahdum blahdumblur." And Bill goes, "Shut up Ben, you're drunk again."

[silence for a few seconds]

S: Funny, isn't it?

D: Yeah. You're drunk.

[laughter]

D: But I think you're charming, personally. Do you mind if I ask you some mean questions?

S: You can ask me, but I might decide I don't want to answer them.

[Kerin interupts. She doesn't want me to ask any mean questions.]

K: Actually, Simon, I have a question that I've waited years to ask.

S: OK, go ahead.

K: Can you please tell me what "Union of the Snake" is all about? Because I've never been able to figure it out.

What the hell am I doing here?

PHOTO: BY SOMEONE IN A TIE THAT I FORCED TO TAKE THE PICTURE

[L TO R] KERIN['S HAIR & ELBOW], JOHN TAYLOR, SOMEONE, IDEAN OF *MEAN STREET*, SIMON LEBON, DARBY, NICK RHODES, GUY FROM BOP [NOTE: KERIN'S BEER IN MIDDLE]

S: You really want to know? Honestly? Have you ever heard of Kundalini?

K: Yes.

S: Tantra. That's it. That explains it all. [Tantra is a form of magick/yoga that uses sex and sexual energy to empower the person/people performing it]

K: Oh really? I had thought it was about a homosexual experience that you'd had...

S: Seriously?

K: Yeah. And then I thought it was maybe a vision or something. I don't know... I had all these theories.

S: I want to hear the nasty questions.

D: You have to keep in mind that I'm not a fan and I was just thinking...

K: I was yelling at her for even thinking about these.

S: No, no no. It's OK. I can handle nasty questions.

D: Well, let me go through them really fast. Oh, this is a mean one. I mean, I've changed my mind now that I've met you...

K: See, we were warned that you guys were going to be totally aloof and stuck up, and that we shouldn't expect much. And I was very, very sad.

D: She was worried that her dream of so many years would end up a nightmare.

S: The anaconda dream.

K: Uh, yeah.

S: I like how that sounded. I'm wondering what you can do with an anaconda, even in an erotic fantasy.

K: Well, think about it. If you were to get a waterbed and take the sheets off it and coat it with oil...

S: Yeah.

K: And you get two people with an anaconda just slithering everywhere, I think it would be interesting.

S: Playing with the anaconda? OK, fine. But anacondas have this habit of constricting people and eating them, so... You've got to make sure you've fed them before you'd do this.

K: Well, yeah.

S: I mean, they get up to 30 feet long these things, it's incredible. They eat pigs and people have been eaten by them as well.

K: Well, I'm a strong girl, so I don't think I'd have a problem.

D: Kerin insists the biggest muscle in the body is the tongue – is a snake a whole muscle?

K: I think the tongue is the strongest muscle.

[Perhaps Kerin's tongue]

S: I can believe that. But if you can tie cherries in a knot with your tongue Kerin, I could crack walnuts with mine. I can make bells ring with my tongue.

K: I can do that too.

Publicist: Who are you talking to Simon?

S: I'm talking to these denizens. Darby, ask some more questions.

D: They're really mean.

S: No, c'mon, I don't mind. I like you. I won't take it personally.

D: Do you think you're young enough to pull it off again?

S: Yes.

D: Do you think you are going to have your pictures plastered where they used to be? Do you think you're going to get the same type of publicity that you did before?

S: Well, I don't think we'd ever attempt to repeat history. I think that would be a little unrealistic, and I think it would also be doomed to failure. Ultimately, I believe it would be very unsatisfying for us as well. I mean, we've done that and been there.

D: Who are going to be your fans today? Do you know what I mean?

S: Yeah. And that's a very interesting question.

D: Most of the kids today seem to be into hip hop and techno bands, so where do you fit in?

S: I don't think we particularly fit into anything that's currently

happening.

D: So, are you worried?

S: No, I'm not. Because I think the music that we've got is strong enough to create a place for it's own genre.

D: And if it fails?

S: If it fails, so what?

D: Well, you were a big success and now you're putting a lot on the line by trying again, when you could stay in a certain stature by not...

S: ...doing anything ever again?

D: Right.

S: Well, that's kinda like the man who's too scared to go next door and borrow the lawnmower because his next door neighbor might say no; so, he just doesn't go over there and ask. I don't think like that at all. I just like music and I love to make it.

D: Have you been making music this whole time?

S: Yes.

D: You have?

S: Making it. Keeping some, chucking some out. Making covers. We've got the Wedding album that's coming out in February and...

D: That's the new one?

S: That's what I call it. We put our parents' wedding photos on the cover, and we'd jokingly call it "The Wedding Album" and it stuck.

D: What's the real name?

S: Duran Duran.

[Other people join in and throw confrontational questions at Simon as he stays remarkably cool. He starts talking about losing his hair and bald spots.]

K: Were you inspired by the [Rolling Stones'] *Steel Wheels* tour?

S: Yes... I find the Rolling Stones to be consistently inspiring. They might not make the best albums all the time, but there's something about them that I find so charismatic – I'm very interested in anything they do. I love Mick. Mick is just the icon that I've grown up with and is such the big part of my idea of what rock and roll is all about.

K: Are there any new bands that you're into?

S: Yeah! I'll give you a really good list. I like Suede. The album hasn't come out yet. I like Stereo MCs, I like House of Pain, I like Madonna, I love Arrested Development. They're my favorites.

K: Wait, how could you like House of Pain? They came up with that song "Jump" after all these other rave bands had already done it.

S: Oh, I don't like that song. I like the one that goes "Boom shalock, shalock, boom. Boom shalock shalock boom." The lyrics are really clever.

[Darby starts cracking up.]

S: C'mon. I want more of these really nasty questions.

D: The other part of my question was, are you still living like the stars you used to be or have you run out of money?

S: I ran out of money years ago and my lifestyle is different now. It's true.

Idean of *Mean Street*: It's not true. He races motorcycles. He's married to a super-model.

S: What's wrong with racing motorcycles? Kevin Schwantz races motorcycles and he's nice.

[Babble. Lots of dining room table babble. Kerin grabs the tape player and starts talking to Nick who no one is paying much attention to.]

K: You were one of the first bands to use synthesizers on the level that you did. I mean, you did so much for that instrument. How do you feel about being considered a musical influence?

N: I think it's great. I mean, it's bound to happen to a degree because we were very successful for some of the '80s, you know. I mean, I know that when I grew up with '70s music, I always cited people like T. Rex, David Bowie, Roxy Music, who are our influences. So I think it's inevitable that the kids that are growing up now, in the '90s are going to be citing us. And I think it's great. Rather us than some crummy band.

K: During your "Seven and the Ragged Tiger" period... you used a very complex synthesizer sound, almost too complex. Today a lot of bands, particularly the industrial dance bands, are falling back to that type of sound – lots of layers and complicated arrangements.

N: Well, I sort of like that slightly organized chaos. I think it makes things a bit more frenetic and a bit more tense. I don't like things that are too pristine, it bothers me. I like to have an underlying thing in there that sort of makes it a bit more warped, really. That's what I think we've always managed to maintain through our records. Duran Duran was never your straight-forward pop group. I love pop music, don't get me wrong.

[Nick keeps talking but Darby screeches and I can't make it out]

Susan/publicist: Did one of you guys drive?

D: Yeah. Why? Is the guy who we hit looking for us?

Susan: No, no. I need a ride back to Hollywood.

K: Sure, we'll take you.

J: Simon, you've got to get to the hotel.

S: Yeah, I've gotta go. Can someone give me a ride?

D: We'll give you a ride.

S: OK.

[Darby frantically tries to find out which hotel and where. Kerin looks on in puzzled admiration. We say our good-byes to the other band members – drooling only slightly over John, who kisses Kerin's cheek (Just for the record the guy is as hot as he ever was). Our friend Susan looks at us bewildered. We have just ditched her for Simon LeBon].

S: Where's your car?

D: Right here. We can all squish into the front seat.

S: I'll sit in the middle. We'll make a Simon sandwich.

D: Earlier you were asking me personal questions, so I want to ask you, what are your masturbatory fantasies.

S: Ooooooh... Mmmmm... yeah... Oh wow.

D: Do you have any tried and true ones?

S: If I've been masturbating for ages and I still haven't cum and I've got an appointment to make, then I might revert to one of the old trusties, yes.

D: OK, now tell us the story.

S: Oh, I don't know. I guess... I'm a bit shy about it.

K: Oh god! Give it up.

S: ...I love skin, wet skin. Wet skin. I like to try and feel skin. Try to imagine I'm actually seeing it, feeling it, smelling it. [Long pause] But I can't really get into it. It's just too private.

D: Oh, you wimped out. I can't believe it. I told you mine.

[Lot's of traffic noise]

S: Not quite rape... just not really having any say in the matter.

K: OK. So, you're into S&M and being dominated.

S: Yeah. I like the idea of dominating too.

K: Being tied up?

S: Tied up? I don't think I'd really like that to be honest with you. It's scary I think.

K: I think being tied up is boring, but I like tying people up.

S: I would not like being whipped. I find S&M fascinating because I can't quite see how, in all these images like the Madonna video, I can't quite see how it's sexy. I tell you what I think is a sexy video – The Divinyls' "I Touch Myself."

K: That's boring.

S: But I think that your sexual palate might be a little more jaded than mine.

K: I'm really into getting into the head of the person that I'm with and finding what is the thing that turns them on and taking them to that level and to the level that they're comfortable at.

S: I'll tell you what. Oh, I'll tell you a fantasy I have got. This is real 1950s kinda of Playboy fantasy. It's a girl dressing up in an a very cute Santa suit.

D: No!

S: That's a masturbatory fantasy. How about that? I like that '50s softcore stuff....

K: Scorpios are supposed to be really good fucks.

D & S: We are.

D: We can't help it.

S: We can't. That's an interesting thing. I think there's a lot of people who don't like fucking. There's a lot of people who do it who don't actually like doing it. [Like the last guy Kerin dated.] I like doing it. I like doing it for awhile and I like being aware of all of it – every bit that I'm touching... Kerin, you said you like getting into people's heads. Well, I like that as well. The psychological bit with me is a very physical thing. So all the headgames, the dressing sex up, is slightly irrelevant to me because the actual physical feeling of pussy on my cock is really what matters. And also the feeling of skin on my skin and the smells that I can smell.

K: That's the way I feel. But I also have to respect that some people, in order to get to that primal feeling, you have to get through all this bullshit they cover it up with...

S: Yes. Wouldn't it be boring if people walked around going "Hey! Do you want to fuck." You'd kinda miss out on the fun.

D: You're married, aren't you?

K: That doesn't mean anything.

D: Have you...

S: Have I been unfaithful?

[Tape recorder is, on request, turned off. Then Simon talks religiously about his kids and his wife.]

K: Don't you think it's odd – when [your daughter] is 13 or 14 and really starts getting into music she will start realizing that her dad was this famous musician. Do you ever think about that?

S: Well, like odd like being a bartender or something?

D: She'll be idolizing stars and then she'll realize that kids actually idolized her father.

K: Exactly! It would be this weird trip. Like "God! Girls jacked off to my dad!"

S: Oh, I see! Yes, it is, it is quite the funny thing, isn't it? I've seen it with the Jagger kids actually.

[Simon shows us pictures of his kids.]

K: [grabbing hold of his tiger necklace, Kerin almost faints in glee] You've had this necklace forever haven't you?

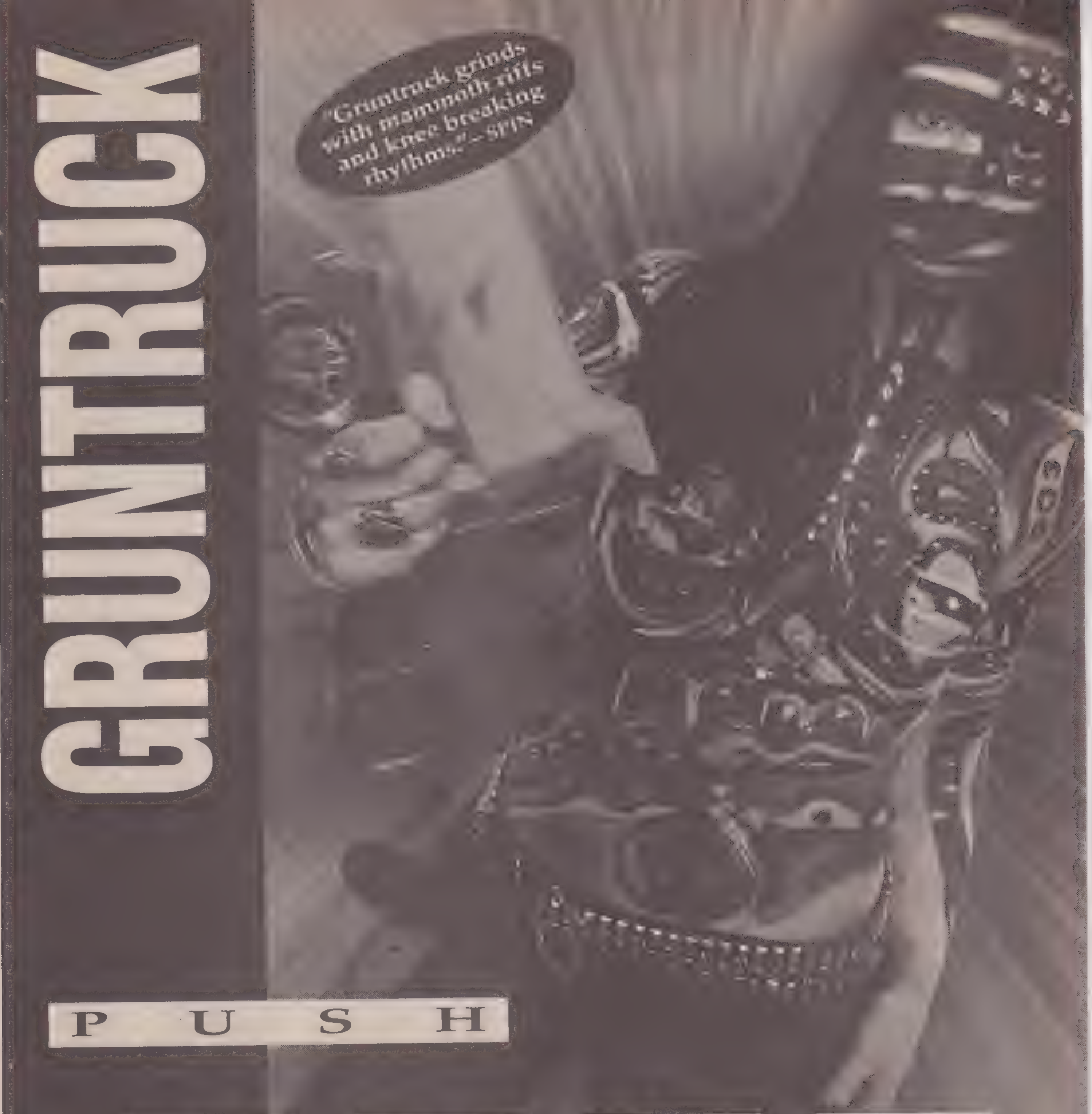
S: Yeah. I really like it. It's the only piece of jewelry I've managed to hang onto.

K: I'm surprised someone hasn't ripped it off you by now.

S: Oh, they tried, they tried. It's been broken, and I've had it mended. Here's the hotel and here's the entrance... This is great. I think you two are fabulous. I think you two are great. If I wasn't married, I'd ask you if we could have a menage a trois.

K: Oh, we'd probably say yes.

The porter helps us open the door as we're too packed in to do it ourselves. Simon kisses us goodbye and poor Kerin is just a mess. We drive away with her playing back the interview "If I wasn't married, I'd ask you if we could have a menage a trois...I'd ask you if we could have a menage a trois...a menage a trois." I don't know, I just don't understand this teen idol groupie thing. ■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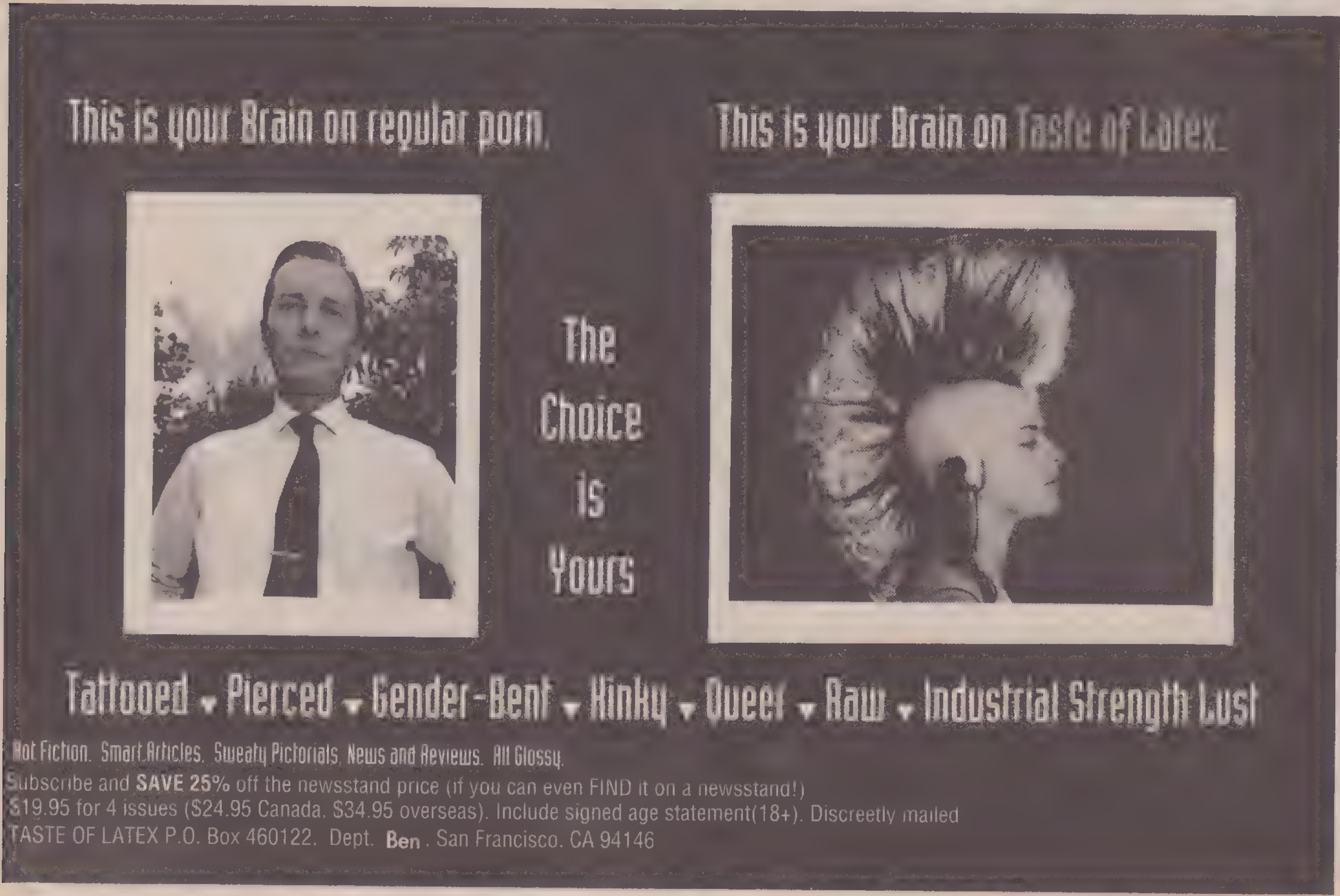
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SLUG INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANTS: Steve Ratter, Tomas Palermo, Todd Williams, Damion Romero, Darby, Kerin Morataya, Jessy Jones, Krista Krol, Alan Anderson, Don Lewis, Don Bolles, and Tom Grimley
INTRO BY: Darby
Thanks to Mr. Grimley for use of his beautiful studio, and weird binaural microphone mannequin thing.

Slug

A long time ago, while Ms. Mikki Halpin still worked on this magazine, we were going to do a *Teen Beat*-style exposé on one of our most beloved "all boy" groups. We were keeping what we called "The Slug File" on the members and their weird idiosyncricies. All about Slugs, Slugdom, being a Slug. We collected too much information though, and some scary organization infiltrated and destroyed our database (to this day we have our suspicions, though Slug will not admit or deny that Tiereistaint Induestieries [see interview] had anything to do with it).

I've grown quite fascinated with the survival techniques of a Slug. This is a band, an actual 'rock' band, with six members; six complicated, confused, unhinged members, who actually have to get together to organize themselves as one functioning beast (or gastropod mollusk of the genus *Limex*). For those of us fortunate enough to have experienced their existence in one form or another, we can appreciate the sheer implausibility of it ever working out. So, when we see them in person, live on stage, or when anything comes out on vinyl, there's that added joy because we know that it was an impossible thing that has beaten the odds. Survival of the fittest to the extreme.

The funny thing about this interview is that we requested the presence of only three to four Slugs – our reason being any more would make it difficult to transcribe. So four Slugs attended, didn't even bother to tell the other two, and we still somehow managed to have the most heavily attended interview in the history of BID. (Yes, Kerin had a great time transcribing, didn't you Kerin? She loves it – that's what she gets paid the big bucks for).

Anyway, coincidentally, Rich, one of the guitarists (not present) has just quit the band after almost 2 years. He was always the outsider, the "loose cannon," growing apart, you might say, from the other members. But he will be remembered [see show reviews pg. 13] and will live on in his "bigger band" Jackknife.

The other Slug missing from our interview, Michael B [shown right in towel], is sort of the abused child. He only found out about our interview weeks later, by accident, when Kerin asked him why he hadn't shown up. So, to make it up to him we've given him this opportunity to do an intro of his very own:

It's a wonder that I'm even contributing to this! In my book, the other guys in Slug are sons-of-bitches. Their "forgetting" to tell me about this interview is typical of the way they operate. Rich didn't quit the band: they kicked him out and then told everybody he quit! The only way Rich found out was when he heard about the shows we played without him! Well, it's time for MY little surprise. I'm quitting Slug before they can fuck me over too. I'm to be replaced by Don Bolles while I'm now in Jackknife. Rich and I are also startng our own newsletter about what pricks these "artists" are. But don't take my word for it. The following pages are a testament to just how far ego and pretention can go. So fuck you Steve, fuck you Todd, fuck you Damion, and fuck you the rest of the band. –Michael B©

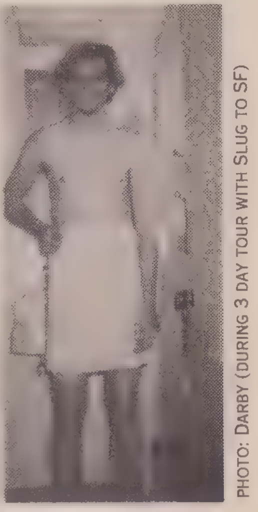


PHOTO: DARBY (DURING 3 DAY TOUR WITH SLUG TO SF)

Michael B©

Darby: The first time I met you Tomás, you interviewed me on KXLU about the No Pay To Play deal. And you had real gross, long, black hair at the time.

Tomás: Oh, right.

Darby: And it took me fucking forever to get you to cut it. I wanted so badly to be there when you did it. I wanted to have this huge Tomás Hair Cutting Party.

Tomás: So many people have come up to me and blamed the downfall of Brenda's character on *90210* on the fact that "I Hate Brenda" popped up.

Darby: This is sorta reminding me of our old *Ben Is Dead* meetings.

Todd: So what's with the Brenda obsession?

Darby: Please don't start. I didn't have anything to do with it. Tom, are we rolling?

Tom: Sure are.

Darby: OK, well, why don't we start off with the hair thing. There's a lot of attention drawn to your hair. To your ever changing hair-do's. Let's just start off on a light foot, can we? I thought you guys had gotten over the goatee thing and we were so happy.

Kerin: But then Michael B started his goatee.

Todd: Yeah, we're not over the goatee thing. It revolves. Damion has one and Michael B has one.

Damion: See, for a long time, I stopped shaving. I just didn't want to deal with it.

Darby: Is this the only place on your face that hair will grow?

Damion: Yeah, I won't grow a beard. I just shaved my mustache off.

Darby: So you guys are an image conscious band.

Todd: Totally conscious.

Darby: Do you have someone helping out with your image?

Todd: We have some consultants.

Damion: There is a guy that we look up to. His name is Reginald Barnes, but he recently shaved his [goatee] off, so we're seeing slow...

Tomás: That was kinda the catch idea for us...

Steve: The impetus.

Tomás: Thank you. What we see Reginald Barnes do, we soon follow suit. Reginald Barnes is, of course, in charge of the whole Tiereistaint Industry.

Darby: Tiera what?

Tomás: Nothing.

Todd: It's a big thing.

Jessy: You don't know?

Darby: What is it?

Jessy: I don't know.

Darby: I didn't see it in *People*.

Steve: It's bigger than all of us. But we don't really like to talk about that kind of thing in interviews.

Tomás: I shouldn't have brought it up, I'm sorry.

Damion: He's produced all our records. He's like a muse, you know?

Todd: He has a lot of say in everything we do. He's our Malcolm McLarren.

Darby: Oh, really?

Tomás: If you look at the back of our releases, you'll see his name, you'll see Tiereistaint Industries, and you'll know that we're not just part of a small label. We're not just on Magnatone – we're part of a whole multinational group that is backed in part by money from...

Todd: Strange sources.

Steve: We don't even know what kind of sources.

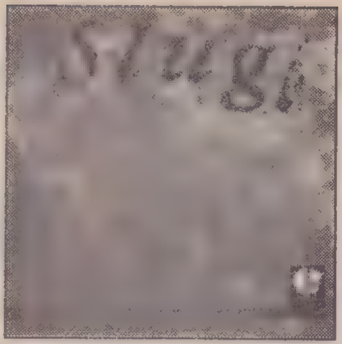
Darby: Dirty money?

Speech was given to man to disguise his thoughts. –Count Talleyrand

3 song 7" includes: "Breathe the Thing Out", "Go Tell" & "Break Neck." Recorded at Surrogate Spike. Engineered by Hammer. Produced by Reginald Barnes. On Sympathy for the Record Industry. 1991.

First release. 4 song 7" includes: "Sore Thumb" "Painbaby", "Freak of Nature" and "Aversion." Recorded at Surrogate Spike. Engineered by Hammer. Produced by Reginald Barnes. On Magnatone. 1990.

One sided, one song 7". "Godstopper" recorded at Poop Alley. Engineered by Tom Grimley. Produced by Reginald Barnes. On Star Fuck label. 1992. 200 pressed.



Split 7" with Unsane. "Streetsweeper" recorded at Poop Alley. Engineered by Tom Grimley. Produced by Reginald Barnes. On P.C.P. Entertainment. 1992. Big Hole.

Kerin: Laundered money?
Jessy: The Mafia?
Tomás: This is why we can't talk about this in an interview.
Steve: We can't talk about it anymore.
Tomás: We won't. The hair thing… OK, you got us on the hair thing.
Darby: So this has no connection to Nation of Ulysses or anything like that?
Tomás: Not at all. The Nation are, if anything, more of a sub-group of Tiereistaint.
Steve: They operate outside of it.
Damion: They don't operate at all anymore.
Tomás: The Organization, I think, considered them to be…
Todd: Expendable.
Tomás: They were more the mercenary soldiers. They were the recruitment.
Darby: So, I want to know if each band member has a side project and why does there have to be a Slug side project?
Tomás: Let's go with it. Steve, why don't you take it first?
Steve: Well, yeah. You gotta remember there's six people, six really, really, really different people. And we come together and do this thing, but…
Todd: It's not like we're going devote all the energy that we have to this. A lot of other energies swirl together into this.
Steve: We've all had experience in one way or another just as far as different kinds of music, studios, and manipulating sound and just working with the equipment basically in the studio. So, given that, I would be surprised if we weren't doing other things outside of Slug.
Damion: We're just six arty fuckers.
Tomás: I don't know about that.
Darby: Now what was your take on the whole thing Tomás?
Tomás: In all seriousness, I'm the band member who doesn't like to have fun.
Damion: Tomás is a martyr.
Steve: He is.
Todd: He's the one who pays the price for our antics.
Kerin: He's got the stigmata.
Steve: He bleeds.
Tomás: We all have these side interests, but all of them sort of…
Darby: I just envisioned a slug bleeding his trail along.
Everyone: Eeeew!
Tomás: Slugs don't bleed. They can pass over razor blades. Anyway, think of noise as being the core. We're atoms that revolve around this core and out of that is Steve's project, Go-Kart, which is sorta a pop thing but has a real dense, sonic nature to it. All of Damion's side projects, from the things you do with Colin…
Todd: What's that band called?
Damion: Oh, I don't know.
Steve: There's a family tree that's so large, it's incredible. There's Buttercup, there's Hi-Hat, there's Open Hand Attack… Jackknife is the biggest of all the groups.
Tomás: Jackknife has the rock n' roll spirit, but it's still at the core.
Todd: Jackknife is the most significant side project, so much so that it's not even a side project anymore. Now Slug is Rich's side project.
Tomás: Somehow, we just all show up at the same time to practice once a week. I feel bad because all these other bands practice like nine times a week.
Darby: You feel bad, why?
Jessy: Because he's a martyr.
Tomás: Because I wish that we could put more time into it. All of us keep saying, "Wow, it would be great if we practiced twice a week."
Steve: We might.
Damion: Maybe one day, and we'll get there twice as fast.
Steve: Todd, name some of your side projects.
Todd: [Lies] I don't have any.
Steve: You don't have any side projects? Now Michael B…
Todd: He's running over with side projects.
Damion: He's bubbling over.
Todd: He just has so damn many.
Steve: He has one called Black Bottom π that sort of explores his more…
Todd: His funk roots.
Steve: Mixed with classic rock.
Todd: Classic funk rock.
Damion: Black Bottom π II is coming out.
Jessy: On K-Tel?
Steve: Yeah. See, we're trying to petition Tiereistaint to get us money to issue forth all this stuff. I mean, we would have a catalog as long as your arm, but they're very wary of it.
Damion: They're very slow with whatever we do.
Tomás: Other than Jackknife. I was in Jackknife.
Darby: You were? That's very exciting!
Todd: He's an original Jackknife member.

TOMÁS PALERMO, DRUMS:
25. Born in Mountain View, CA. Formed Slug with Todd in 1988. Side projects: Tse Bomb, Nerve Center, Di Phi Cult, Stakeout, Laidlaw Children, and vntrcls. Is a regular contributor for Urb Magazine, as well as Ben Is Dead (whenever we can steal him away). He DJs Sat nights on the Reggae Music Forward show on KXLU. He also DJ's at many of the hip hop clubs in LA. He recently left Rhino to become Reggae and International buyer at Aron's Records. Was a poetry major at Loyola. Put out own 'zines: It All Lies Beneath the Surface, LUV, and a number of one-offs. This man is known for his car problems and body hair.

STEVE RATTER, VOCALS:
25. An Aries born on March 22, 1968 in Tonawanda, NY. Joined Slug in late 1990. Side projects include Go-Kart, Stakeout, Cutthroats 9. DJ's the Molotov Cocktail Hour on Tuesday nights on KXLU where he was once music director. Previously a buyer at Rhino Records he now spends his days as a Magnatone employee and at Philips Interactive Media "breaking toys." Looks much better without a goatee.

lug
Magnatone

Eight song 10" "Swingers" LP (also a CD with two bonus tracks). Includes: "Messerschmidt", "Face Down", "Four by Four", "Lockjaw", "Go Tell", "Hail America!", "Trafalgar Square", and "Swingers." Recorded at Surrogate Spike. Engineered by Robert Hammer. Produced by Reginald Barnes. Digital Hi-jinks by Tom Grimley at Poop Alley. Co-released by Magnatone and Piece of Mind, 1992.

Jessy: Tomás gave them their name and he, shortly thereafter, left the band.

Kerin: You did the most important part.

Steve: You see he's also kinda a Malcolm McClaren figure as well. Tomás also had a hand in putting together Crimewave which was... boy if that could have ever seen the light of day, it would have knocked the kids down.

Tomás: That was the industrial-dub project.

Steve: But it was with some English guys. Damion, I really want to remember what your band was.

Todd: Hard-Boiled?

Damion: We'll just draw you a family tree as an explanation.

[Slug starts drawing their family tree]

Darby: Does each band member have their own record label too?

Damion: As a band, we started Magnatone to put out our first record. And since then, different people have gotten more involved in different projects, but we've released a bunch of different things.

Steve: When there's a need, it's called Thrill.

Damion: Rich has Star Fuck, which is his own thing. And he's released several items, none of which are available because they're all out of print.

Tomás: Those were all distributed by Magnatone.

Steve: And Jamboree.

Todd: That's the pop wing of Magnatone.

Kerin: And what is the one that you do Tomás?

Tomás: I might start something later on, but I haven't done anything yet.

Steve: Anybody can have a record label. Anybody can have a Japanese record.

Tomás: You know that Nels Cline single? That wasn't actually our label, but it was a co-release with four other labels.

Darby: Yeah, what was that all about?

Steve: With Forced Exposure, Ecstatic Peace... Everybody pitches in a little bit of money and there you go. You pool together, and then it's on all the labels. Anyone can have their own label.

Todd: Star Fuck proves that anyone can have their own label.

Tomás: Plus, what's the first major idea that you kinda infuse into your head when you get familiar with all of this underground music? The idea that anyone can make it. Anybody can fucking do it. And everybody should be doing it because it completely goes against the whole corporate rock idea...

Steve: Of this gigantic star and this huge audience, and this person is so much better than this person... It's easy. It's nothing. You can make real whatever you want to make real.

Darby: That's very deep.

Todd: That's why he's the lyricist.

Darby: I'm just confused as to how in the hell... First of all, individually, how you guys function just baffles me. Then you have six of you Slugs in one band, all together, and then you're always doing ten billion things at once. It just blows my mind.

Steve: That's only because you know us.

Tomás: That's why there's only two hours a week that we practice.

Darby: How in the hell does it even come together? How can six people do it, when a band of three can barely organize time to practice?

Steve: It's hell.

Damion: That's exactly what makes us exactly what we are.

Steve: Broke and unknown.

Darby: Do you fight a lot? Go into communication with the band, how does it all...

Steve: That's, that's interesting. Well, I don't know if that's interesting or not but... I've lived with Tomás for a number of years, I've lived with Todd, and I've lived with Michael B.

Tomás: And I've lived with Michael B, and now I live with Todd, and I've also lived with Steve.

Todd: But none of us have ever lived with Damion or Rich.

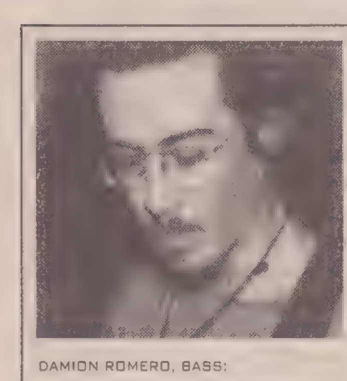
Kerin: So are you guys the outsiders?

Damion: I don't know.

Steve: We have known each other for a long time. Todd and Michael B have known each other for a long, long time. And we've probably all known each other for at least five years. So, that's a good basis for some [communication]. I mean, like if somebody dropped out and we said "Oh gosh! We need another drummer." That couldn't be.

Todd: No way.

Steve: We wouldn't put an ad in *The Recycler*. We



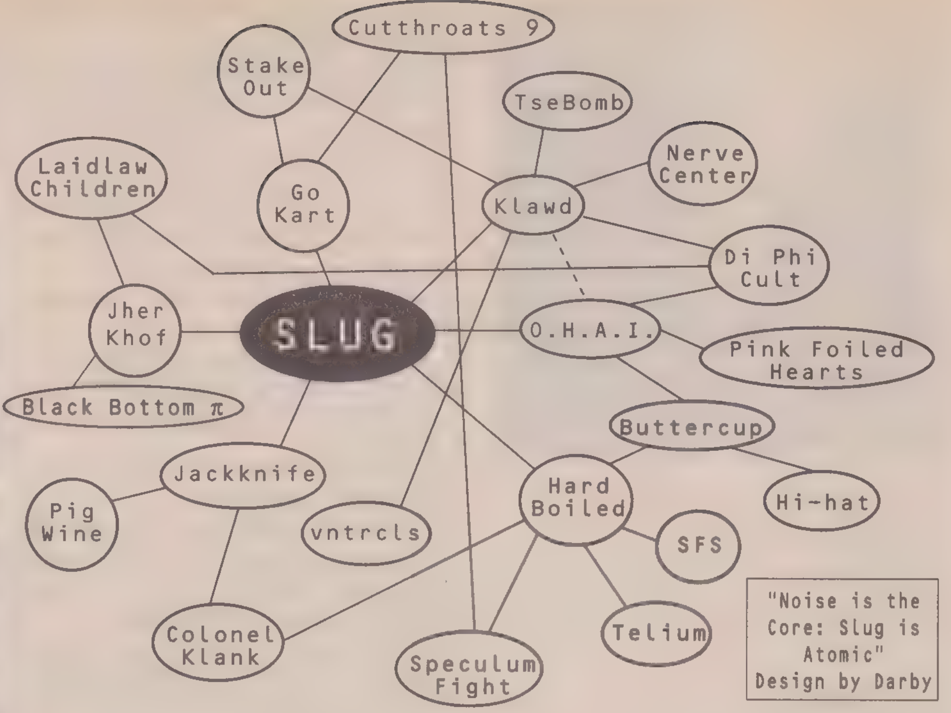
DAMION ROMERO, BASS:
22. Born 7/7/70 in Topanga Canyon. Bass player. Joined Slug in 1989. Side projects consist of Colonel Klank, Hardboiled, Buttercup, SFS, Telium Group, Speculum Fight, and Cutthroats 9 with Don Bolles. Currently is employed as an "experimental/noise" buyer for Aron's Records. DJs the Psychotechnics show on KXLU Tuesday nights with Michael B. Renowned for his knowledge on Japanese noise bands and for dating famous LA women musicians. Is easily recognized by his good looks, big hair, and necklace of an elevator button; 3rd floor. Probably the best chess player of all the Slugs.

RICH ALVAREZ, GUITAR:
Born on December 6, 1969 in Altamont, California. Joined Slug in late 1991. Side projects: Pig Wine, Colonel Klank, and Jackknife with his girlfriend Sandra and Lara U [sister of Distorted Pony singer/guitarist David U]. Currently employed at Interscope Records. Runs his own record label Star Fuck. Was once jailed by the Secret Service for a hate letter to President Bush. Used to run an "all-Dickies" fanzine. Got kicked off KXLU because of a comment he made about [Loyola basketball star] Hank Gathers minutes before he died.

TODD WILLIAMS, GUITAR:
28. A Virgo born in Los Angeles. Formed Slug with Tomás. Side projects: D.H.A.I., Di Phi Cult, Pink Foiled Hearts, Buttercup, and Hi-hat. Shoots, edits, and co-produces a public access cable T.V. show, Atomic TV, which features live footage and interviews with local and touring bands. DJ's a show on KXLU, Sadayatana, and a show on KCRW as well. Fine coffee and imported beer snob. Known by his co-workers at Philips as a computer wizard. Wild card, silent type. Steve Ratter says he's "as likely to pet a kitten as he is to go into a post office and shoot someone."

MICHAEL B©, BASS:
29. A Pisces born in Inglewood, CA. Childhood friends with Todd. Joined Slug early 1990. Side projects: Laidlaw Children and Jher Khof. Owns the copyright of his last name. Was the death rock DJ back in the good(?) old days; spinning loads of Christian Death for all his amped little girl groupies. DJs Psychotechnics show with Damion. Spends his 9-5s at Philips working on the new CDI technology. Looks great in a towel. His sister, Lisa, works at Disneyland.

All photos Don Lewis except Michael B by Gail Butensky



"Noise is the Core: Slug is Atomic"
Design by Darby

wouldn't say "influences have got to be...". It wouldn't work.

Todd: Yeah, Slug just kinda fell together. It started as me and Tomás just screwing around, and we didn't have any big ideas about what we were doing and then Damion came along and screwed around with us.

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

RICH WITH GUITAR SANS BRACES

Steve: Screwed them up a little.

Todd: And it just kept growing and growing.

Damion: And then Michael B came in and then Rich.

Kerin: And your first show was at?

Tomás: The *Ben Is Dead* Benefit.

Darby: We'll just plug ourselves in our own magazine.

Damion: And it wasn't even our first show as what we are now. Steve wasn't in the band yet. What was the first show we did with you?

Steve: The Lectisternium show with Caroliner, before Steel Pole Bathtub.

Tomás: When we formed, we had terrible instruments, a very disjointed sound and tape loops and skipping records and things like that.

Todd: And it was sort of typical that none of us could play.

Tomás: And it seems like a shame that we've gone the route that a lot of bands go and that's that they change and their sound develops and they turn into something different.

Darby: You wanted to keep it that way?

Steve: [jokes] We're going to put out sort of a more metallish record on Giant soon.

Darby: You wanted to keep your sound that way?

Tomás: No, it's just unfortunate that you have to lose that total fresh sense of...

Todd: Spontaneous composing.

Tomás: Yeah, total spontaneity.

Todd: I've got a tape of me and Tomás screwing around in my garage that's so hilarious to listen to. We're banging on trash cans and I'm...

Darby: You can't get that anymore? Why, because you know [how to play] your instruments now?

Todd: No, it's just that, now we've become a band.

Kerin: Yeah, but you have all these side projects that you do. So, you're saying you can't experience that with Slug?

Tomás: It's just hard dealing with the "rock ethic". You put together this band and, someone asks you to do a show and then they throw you into this mold. "OK, be here at this time and tell us who's on your guest list. You'll perform from this time to this time and you'll make X amount of dollars. You will play a song, you will stop, and then people will clap."

[Alan of Popdefect comes in around now]

Kerin: But isn't that like anything that you do in life? Like driving a car, or having a job, or doing anything? You're given certain rules.

Darby: But being in a band, you expect a more creative...

Steve: That kind of thing is inevitable because...

Kerin: You could have worked harder at not trying to learn your instruments. That would have been a step.

Todd: Oh, we've tried pretty hard. The point isn't really, "Oh, too bad we're a band now." It's more that a lot of the fun, spontaneous stuff is gone. I remember the first couple of shows we played at Lectisternium and Loyola, I didn't care what happened. I didn't care if people hated it or anything because it was just us screwing around. We didn't give a shit.

Tomás: It was really built on that Miss-

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

DAMION SHOWS FIRE AND ORANGES DO MIX

ing Foundation [confrontational New York band] ethic where it's just like, throwing something at an audience and whatever happens, happens.

Todd: We would have tapes running continuously through our show where the tapes were louder than we were or we'd have stupid props and stuff like that. But it gets to a point when you've evolved into a rock band that plays live shows on a regular basis, your audience comes to expect something from you. And even though you can say "I don't care about them. Fuck it", you still don't want to go out there and piss everyone off and all of a sudden suck.

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

TOMAS AS A CRAZED YOUTH

Tomás: That's why I think the whole Japanese noise thing is really good because of its anti-Western traditions of music and rock and form and stuff like that. It puts the fuck back into music.

Damion: It's the fact that it could be anything. It's not about music. It's not about a beat or a song. It's the fact that it could be anything.

Alan: Spontaneity is definitely a good thing, but at some point, I think you're going to impose structure on it. Structure has to be imposed. Who imposes the structure and do you lock certain individuals out of the lead decision-making process for the band? Since there are six individuals, it's got to be pretty difficult.

Steve: Sometimes it is, but usually it's not that hard. Things just kinda roll along the way they do.

Alan: Is there temptation in any of the six egos involved in Slug to try to coerce that direction?

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

STEVE INTRODUCES NEW DANCES TO THE LA CLUB SCENE

Todd: The thing about us that's kinda unique is that we all do our own thing but we all do our own thing in such way that it will all seem to go together, with the exception of Damion and Michael B who have to work together in order to mesh together. But me and Rich generally do completely different things. Rich is more of a rock 'n' roll, blues... I don't want to give the wrong impression of Rich, but he's got that kinda blues influence – the old ones.

Damion: In the best fucked up way, though.

Todd: Yeah, in a real fucked up rock way. So, he plays that kinda stuff, and I tend to just do whatever the fuck. Rich and I are totally different in the way we play and Damion and Michael B are too, but they have to work closer together to come up with an [agreed upon] sound. We all do our own thing and it all just manages to come together, so I don't think there's anyone locked out of the process.

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

Tomás: Very rarely do we say 'Don't play it that way, play it this way.' It's always like we tell them to make subtle changes.

Todd: Or someone will say 'I don't like that' and we'll fuck around with it and try to fix it.

Steve: And in many bands, there's sometimes just one person who writes all the music, and they'll be the one who comes up with songs and writes everyone's parts. We don't really have that.

Todd: I can't imagine working in that type of situation. I think we're all so individual in the way we play the music, that I can't imagine one of us walking in and saying 'Here. I've written a song. You play this, you play this, you play this. Let's go.'

Krista: You were saying that you don't necessarily aspire to make money. That's what I'm curious about – you seem to be as broke as I am, so how do you operate? How can you exist as a label if you're a person who doesn't have any money?

Damion: It's easier than you think.

Darby: Now, this can go straight into your jobs, and the Philips Conspiracy.

Damion: They wouldn't hire me.

Steve: Well, Philips is a company. It's a Dutch multinational, I believe it's the fifth largest in the world. They're part of Oster, the company that invented your vibrator, Kerin. They invented the cassette and the CD and the 8 track.

Darby: They invented the 8 track?

Alan: Yeah.

Todd: They don't claim that, though.

Damion: Who would?

Tomás: Tiereistant is actually trying to buy Philips but there's some problem having to do with German Daniel Roehnert and the Dutch.

Steve: Basically, I started working there and I was lonely and I wanted some of my friends to work there. So, Michael B was working at a movie theater at the time. Todd had a great job, and was supporting himself quite well. So, I told those guys about it, and they started working there and I tried to get

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Damion a job…

Damion: I was too good for them.

Tomás: Tiereistant overqualified him.

Darby: It's great of a company to do that – when you're overqualified they don't take you.

Steve: Many people from other LA local bands work there as well.

Kerin: Like?

Steve: Oh, Alan Anderson from PopDefect, John Garry from Stuckas Over Bedrock, some of the people from Dogstar…

Krista: And what level positions do you hold there? What echelons do all these luminaries find themselves a part of?

Kerin: They're video game testers.

Steve: We play games.

Todd: We play with toys.

Alan: We break things. Our job is to break things.

Damion: I was too good at it.

Todd: Yeah, Damion broke them too easily.

Tomás: He broke them the wrong way.

Darby: So those with the higher qualifications moved onto record stores.

Tomás: Uh-huh.

Darby: And now you guys write up consignment sheets.

Tomás: Right.

Darby: So, tell us Tomás, the most thinly spread man in Los Angeles, tell us a little about your lifestyle and if you do have any sex at all.

Tomás: Well, my life is split in two co-existing worlds. The first being that of the alternative milieu, and the other being the pop/club world. And I don't know how I got involved in that, but they both stem out of a great love for music. And if you get involved in any sort of way, you can get over-involved and overextended. You want to do everything – put on clubs, write for magazines. So, you know, I do a little DJing here and there and write for *Urb* Magazine which fulfills my desire to write about dance music type records.

Darby: When do you have time to make money?

Tomás: Well, the money I make quickly blows right out of my pocket to bill collecting agencies. I'm currently $3000 in debt, I'm usually overdrawn at the bank but the fact that I can pay my rent is beautiful. I mean, I'm happy and that's all that matters. I lived in a bread truck one summer and that taught me a lot.

Alan: So have you guys gotten over the stigma of being [KXLU] DJs yet?

Tomás: Almost. We're getting there.

Darby: Have all the other bands gotten over it yet?

Steve: Thanks a lot Darby.

Darby: Well, some people go "Gee. How come I can't get played on KXLU? How come my record's not even at KXLU even though I sent them three copies? Why does Slug just happen to be so lucky and get the run of the place?"

Steve: Because we pay everyone off and we own that station. [sarcastic] We own L.A.

Darby: I mean, I think your being DJs helped a lot and it's not something you can deny…

Todd: We don't deny our affiliation with KXLU at all. But we don't like to wear it… I mean, I've always strongly said that doesn't have anything to do with the band. We don't sit around thinking up promotional gimmicks.

Steve: We're not checking where we are on the charts.

Alan: But, your music doesn't fit in very well with The Reggae Show, does it Tomás? And it doesn't fit in during The Molotov Cocktail Hour, does it Steve?

Tomás: Well, listen, everybody understands the concept of conflict of interests. Politicians are always getting sued and thrown out of office for conflict of interests. With that in mind, and in all fairness to other bands and other people, we try and separate the two things that we've been involved in. That sounds fair, and it makes sense.

Damion: We don't play our own band on the radio.

Jessy: So, out of the six members, how many are DJs?

Tomás: Five right now.

Steve: All of us, at one time or another, have been DJs, and my thought on that is that we're around music for so long and all the time – I was the Music Director up there (KXLU) a few years ago, Michael B was the Music Director up there a long time ago – and I would be surprised that after spending so much of our time, money, and our effort to listen to music all the time and be involved in it, I would be surprised if we hadn't done something.

Todd: The reality is that almost all of us met each other at that station. I mean, that's how we understood that we all had the same interests. I know for a fact that none of us would know Damion if it weren't for that station.

Damion: I used to listen to Michael B in high school, and call him up and make requests. Then I went up to visit him, and he was really cool and let me DJ. And later, I went to Loyola and I became a DJ, and I met Tomás. I met Todd before that because he was Michael B's friend, and I later met Steve. Rich and I entered school at the same time and somehow, instantly, we became friends….

Steve: Well, yeah. I mean, it's just another thing we do, and yeah, there's a conflict of interest, but it would be like if someone who was writing for your magazine was in a band. AHEM!

Kerin: Yeah, yeah.

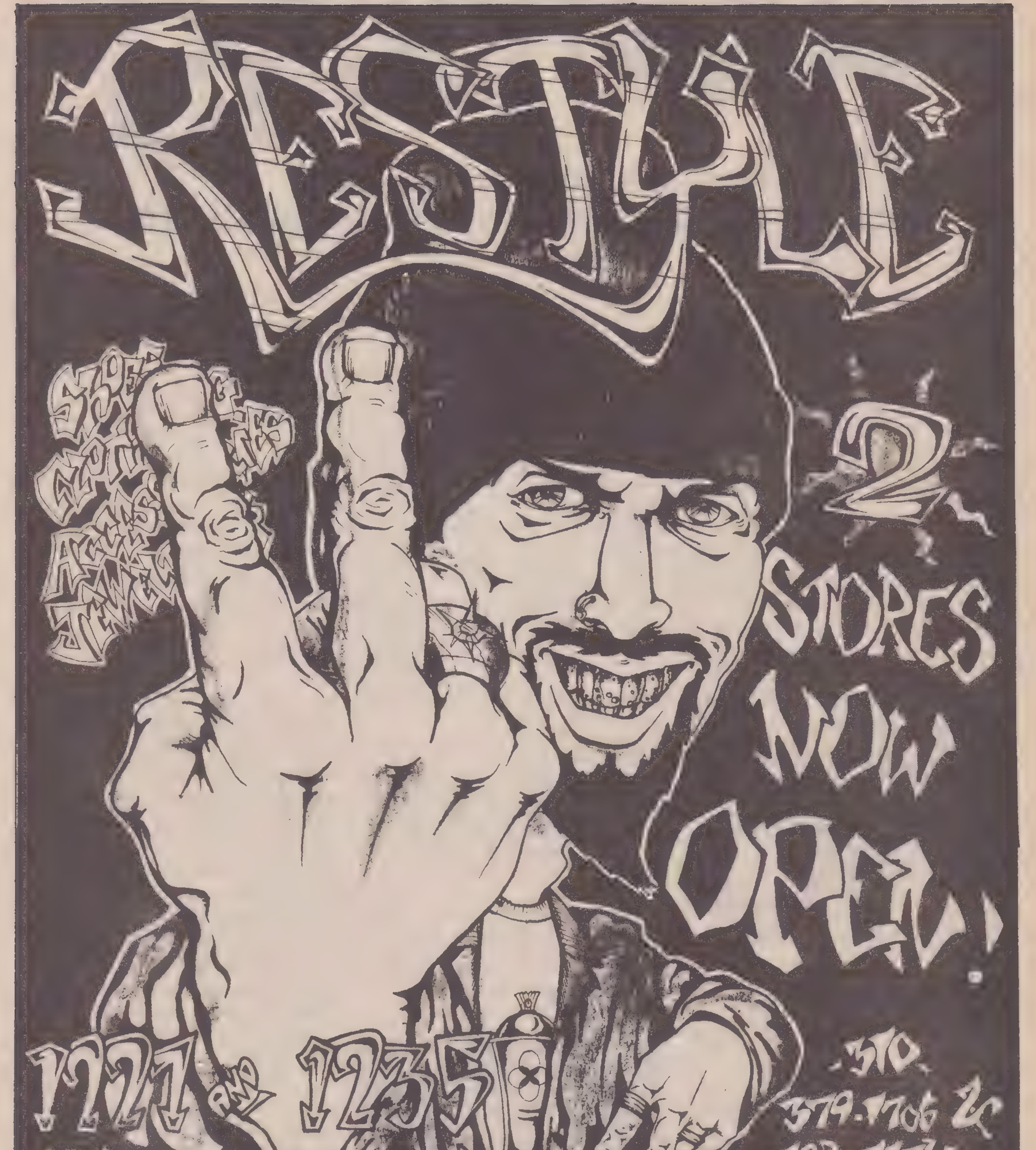
Darby: [Counting people in attendence to whom this applies] One, two, three, four…

Kerin: Nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

Steve: It's all part of the support system – you're around the music, you're around the people, you go to shows… it's all inter-related and there's no way around that.

Slug is currently working two new 7"'s. One for Sympathy entitled "Hambone City" and another for PCP entitled "Rubberape." Their new LP/CD "The Out Sound" will be released by PCP sometime around the Fall of '93. You can send all types of fan mail and requests for label information to Magnatone Products P.O. Box 2576, El Segundo, CA 90245. [Star Fuck is at the same address]

What you can't communicate runs your life. - Dr. Robert Anthony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SKATENIGS

PEOPLE DOING WHAT THEY WANT TO DO: THE ULTIMATE SKATENIGS INTERVIEW OR "HOW TO COMMUNICATE ON DRUGS"

BY KERIN, DARBY AND PETER

I discovered the Skatenigs about a year and a half ago when I received a two song CD of theirs from Wax Trax. From the moment I first listened to it, I was obsessed. Who the fuck were these guys and how come I couldn't find anything else on them? So you can imagine my excitement when I found out they were going to be at CMJ. We set up an interview and arrived at their hotel in usual BID style – late, hungry and with no questions. "This is going to be a disaster", I said to Darby as we waited for them to meet us in the lobby. And waited. And waited. When they finally arrived, and introductions were made, the first thing on their mind? Food. "I don't even want to think about doing an interview until I've eaten," said Skatenig Billy Jackson. Darby and I looked at each other. Kindred spirits. After searching the Wall Street area for what seemed like hours, we somehow found consolation in a TGIF restaurant. We drank gallons of their iced tea and shared our french fries, and when it came time to do the interview, Skatenig Phildo Owen offered their hotel room as the location and room service as the entertainment. Well, we have a thing for room service, so we agreed. But, come to think of it, I don't think we ever ended up ordering room service. Instead, when we arrived, we were offered some weird little pill. "What the fuck is this?" Darby asked. "It's a Mexican pill called a Rohypnol. It's cool man. We make regular trips to Mexico for these things,"answered Billy. "Just take it," I said. And after a bit of hounding, Darby gave in and popped the pill as well (I couldn't take the pressure.– Darby). And soon Darby, Peter, and I were on our way to a fantastic voyage. A half hour later we were all drooling, mumbling idiots who couldn't talk but managed to do a two hour interview that Darby barely remembers. –Kerin

Darby: So, you guys do a lot of drugs?

Phildo: No.

D: No, or no comment?

P: We don't do a lot of drugs. We do many drugs.

D: Do you usually get your interviewees high?

P: No. Usually we don't like our interviewees.

D: Oh really? Is that a compliment or...

P: No, it's just serious.

D: Your album, "Stupid People Shouldn't Breed", was there any...

P: Bumper sticker on a pig truck. Made sense at the time.

D: How did it make sense?

P: Well, we just thought it was kinda funny 'cause it was on a pig truck and I used to raise pigs and we all started laughing. Then we thought, "Well, it kinda makes sense because if stupid people bred, they might grow up to be Skatenigs."

D: What is a Skatenig?

Billy: It's an attitude more than anything.

D: Is it like some gang...

P: No, Skatenig was a name that was laid on us in the early days by a bunch of people, before I even started the band... This was back when I was skateboarding and all my friends were skateboarders and it was a name that was laid on us...

D: Laid on you?

P: Yeah. We would hold skateboard contests and people would come into town and we were known as the Skatenigs. It was a derogatory thing but we just took it and ran with it.

B: We were the first skateboard punks who would listen to rap music...

P: I was the first punk DJ in Austin who would play rap music with punk and it was not really a cool thing to do 'til it caught on later. We were just known for that. We were known for being really different and wild and having this attitude and people called us Skatenigs. It just stuck when I got the band together. It's always kept the same meaning as far as the attitude – we're people doing what we want to do. That has remained true throughout the history of the band. I started the band four years ago. You've been in the band three years, right?

B: Yeah, right before that last (Revolting) Cocks tour... Skatenigs is like a branding iron that we like to leave on at least a few people in every town. The few people that we hook up and get along with and three days later you're all like "How many drugs did I take? How many place did we get kicked out of? How many lawsuits?"

P: It's always had an attitude connotation but now even more so... It's a lot easier to take a name that doesn't mean anything to begin with and give it your own meaning than it is to conjure up a name that already means something and try to give it a different meaning. It just doesn't work.

[The pill hits Darby. From here on out everything she says is at half speed.]

D: People... doing... what... they... want... to... do?

PHOTOS BY AND OF: A NUMBER OF FUCKED UP INDIVIDUALS

B: You're wasted.

Peter: Let's talk about you raising pigs. You raised pigs for like 4H or...

P: I didn't abuse them after I was over 17.

D: What do you mean abuse?

Kerin: Like, sexually?

Our music is written around our daily life experiences. Everyone that we're surrounded by in Austin is so animated that we've gotten to the point where we're writing a soundtrack to the cartoon we're living.

P: I can't really say, except I'm not guilty of any animal abuse after...

B: There's a cloudy seven year period in his life that he's laid on several couches to try and reverse the effects.

D: This is something bigger than the eating of pillbugs.

P: I was a pig farmer. It was a thing. I sold pigs.

P: Were your parents farmers?

P: My parents are rodeo people.

K: Really?

P: Yeah, I grew up on a ranch.

B: His mom's a champion barrel racer.

P: My dad's a champion cow roper. [offers pot to Darby]

D: Oh no. No no. I'm having enough problems.

K: Are you the kind of band that calls up radio stations and requests yourselves?

P: Have we done this interview before? We got started by writing up our own reviews and I would send them into this magazine and... I would put them in the night before printing and write it under one of their writers' names like "Please put this in. I forgot to include it." That's how we got all our hype in the early days 'cause we would give ourselves our own reviews and write about ourselves. We started getting like 500 people after our first show just because we gave ourselves a great review and recommended ourselves the next time we played. Hype's great! Especially if it's the kind of hype you want.

K: Our band does that sometimes. We started as an answering machine band. The first of our kind.

P: We've been doing a lot of phone sex lately.

D: Amongst yourselves?

P: Speaking for Billy, I can say he's doing quite a bit.

K: Are you a phone slut Billy?

P: He's a phone slut.

D: Meaning you just talk on the phone a lot or you...

P: No, we've done some talking to some 900 hotlines that we're going to use for some of the samples on our next record. We've also brought in some out-of-work actors from Austin, or I guess you'd say some out-of-work people. That's where a lot of our samples are coming from.

B: Our music is written around our daily life experiences. Everyone that we're surrounded by in Austin is so animated that we've gotten to the point where we're writing a soundtrack to the cartoon that we're living.

K: That's beautiful.

P: That's my line! You took my line Billy.

D: She always takes my lines.

K: I don't take your lines.

P: It's a disease. It's a disease.

K: When did you get signed to Wax Trax?

P: I guess we'd been a band for about a year and a half, when we got the Wax Trax deal. We did a single, which was the original "Chemical Imbalance" and then we recorded the album the next year. Then Wax Trax was going through some money problems and they couldn't afford to promote a different band other than a dance band, so we offered the record to Megaforce and they liked it. [Editor's Note: The band has since parted ways with Megaforce] It was in the can over a year ago, and it just got released last month. We couldn't do a proper tour because we didn't have an album coming out until September, so during the summer we made a couple of band changes and wrote songs and 70% of our set is off the album and 30% is new stuff that we're working on.

K: How many line-up changes have you guys been through?

B: I can't even count.

P: Since the album? Well, since the beginning, several. When I first started the band, the musicianship was very minimal. I mean, it was a joke. We were trying to be a clown act up on stage and just be as obnoxious as possible. We had like three singers the first show we played, just screaming.

B: We met after I had just moved to Austin. I was

Chemical Imbalance

intro by Lori Jackson

As immaturity may be a result of certain chemical imbalances
So may the friggin' Skatenigs flick the trigger on a sucker
Squealing studs of pudness
They sing stuck in a rut in pig-pod land
They share rigs with grave diggers
Worry 'bout death when it's done, come, and gone
You buy their records and they'll piss on your mama's best collectibles
They beat their rancid meat expect you to pay the check
They ream the beef of bad backstage girls redundant in nu-wave black
Up the butt
Snuck
Stuck
Mucked up
Sucked
I'd eat baboon bile before I'd bite on their juvenile penile pole projections
They casually, smashingly refer to as "My dick"
Infected
Rejected
Afflicted
Maladicted
Bored if constricted
If immaturity is indeed a result of certain chemical imbalances
Then these guys are on a permanent Amoco overload
Crawling through maggot-breath yee-haw boys with latex toys
If butt-holes are peep-shows, then the 'Nigs are the window to the soul
Of this fucking ridiculous world
Anality's got nothing on these boys
'Cept a signed royalty check
A forged signature
The toilet swipe
The mega-acid smile
The glitch in the universal way, yeah
A real boss abortion to brag about at your next barbecue

Talk low, talk slow, and don't say too much. -John Wayne playing with Ray Washam who used to play with Scratch Acid, and now plays with Tad. We were jamming with Helios Creed and Phil asked me to play on some songs when they were playing with Ministry and I went out to see them at the Ritz in Austin - the Skatenigs that is. And I walked into this horrible wall of just nothing music and Phil's up there wearing this giant prosthetic penis squirting mousse all over himself and the audience, just losing his mind. I had been searching forever to find someone who... he was more concerned with causing havoc in his own mind, more than anything else probably, than with the music or any of that shit and the whole place was totally into it. And it was the worst sounding thing I had ever heard. Then we started playing and kept changing the line-up until we got the sound right. We made the album, a few more band changes, and now we feel we have the perfect line-up.

K: How many people are traveling with you now?

P: Skrew's with us right now, but we've got 16 people and that's about what it will be when we go out.

B: We're already being accused of being the Grateful Dead, in that respect.

K: I heard you have lots of naked girls on stage with you.

P: No. We have a dominatrix that's on tour with us.

B: She's been with us for almost a couple of years now. She started off as a stripper and now she has evolved herself into a complete discipline act on stage.

P: She's in the "Loudspeaker" video.

B: Basically, her goal is to pick out the dirty little boys and relieve them of the sins they have brought upon themselves.

D: Does she strip them down?

M: Whatever she wants to do.

P: Yeah, she runs things in that regard.

B: She's our best stage hand, she's our best stage guard. She's been in a couple of fist fights with girls.

P: We've been doing it forever, but it's like everybody's doing it now. The whole bondage thing is starting to get too trendy. You just kinda gotta keep moving around. We always do something different on stage just to make it an event. When we do a show, it's a show. When we put together a show, we put together something for people to listen to and to see, you know, get a feel for the band.

D: So, what are you doing after this last release...

K: I thought you were going to say what are you doing after the show.

P: I'm sorry, but those weren't real Mexican pills. Those weren't real Rohypnols. They were Spanish Fly.

D: What?

P: Spanish Fly.

B: Sorry.

P: Sorry. It happens.

D: What is Spanish Fly? Isn't it an aphrodisiac?

K: Actually, I've read it poisons lots of people.

P: It's a joke! It's a joke! Look at your faces!

D: They just gave me a pill, and I stuck it in my mouth, and now I'm like...

[laughter]

B: Yes! That's what a Skatenig is! You guys are honorary Skatenigs now!

P: Now you understand!

B: Love Biscuit #9!

P: [sings] Love Biscuit #9!

D: Are we part of the gang now? Do we get jackets?

B: Well, you get a tattoo next, and we'll be doing that in a couple of hours.

K: Let's see.

[Phil pulls up shirt.]

B: Frank Kozik did it.

[Phil takes off clothes and models tattoos for us.]

P: This is the artist that did our album cover. This [points to scar] is where they cut a piece of my lung out. [tries to put clothes back on]

D: No, wait. How do you work this thing?

[Darby tries and pathetically fails to take pictures of the tattoos]

K: She just wants to see you without your shirt on.

P: I guess that pill is really kicking in.

P: Yeah it is. It's Super Spanish Fly.

B: Have you guys ever seen that movie "Frankenhooker"?

K: Yeah.

B: Do you remember when she's trying to score "Super Crack"?

K: Remember it? I deal it.

P: "With Super Crack, you do just fine!" That's a great film.

P: So is Slacker.

P: I guess the short edited version was cool except they left out a lot of Austin. I think what the guy was trying to achieve was to show what his life was like there. The thing is, there's so many other Slackers in Austin. Slacker was such a great concept to do a piece about because it is the ultimate place to be able to live for nothing. People out there are really nice. If you have to squat at someone's house for awhile, someone's always willing to put you up. It's really cheap. You can live in a house for $400-500 a month. A good house.

...felching's where you suck the cum out of the butt. Trowling is when you get bean-dip, Frito Lay Bean Dip, and you cum up the butt and then you pack the bean dip up, and you let it ferment overnight, and then you peel the bean dip back, and suck out the nectar of the gods. That's trowling.

K: So what's it like in Austin?

P: Austin's very mellow and very radical and very conservative and very liberal.

K: Like any other city?

P: It's a little town with a lot of big city features.... It's a good environment for us. It's hard to explain what we really like because we like so many aspects of it.

B: It's a mecca for freaks from the midwest. They all just flock to Austin so there's just as many sick and disgusting things that go on there as go on in New York. They (NYC) just know how to promote it better, so they get the mass media attention.

P: So besides yourselves, who's your favorite band out of Austin?

B: My personal favorites are the Bad Livers and Crust.

P: The Bad Livers are awesome and probably the best musicians and damn good song writers. Really good. Crust is great. They've been favorites of ours for a long time. We like Pantera, White Zombie. We like a lot of rap. Was that even a question or did I just go off?

B: They asked what Austin bands we liked.

P: Oh, from Austin. There's a lot of good bands in Austin.

K: Do you have any road stories? I want really

juicy ones.

B: There's a sheep story. But you should tell them about it Phil.

P: Well, we did do a sheep show in Nashville. We changed all the songs in our set to be about sheep. So we had 'Horny for Sheep', 'Chemical Sheep'...

B: 'Sheep Authority', 'Pounding Sheep'...

P: Actually, we don't like to talk about sheep really. While we're on the topic of livestock, we would like to send a message out. Don't pet your chickens. Touch them. But the road story I was going to tell you was that Billy got us kicked out of our hotel in Nashville. We're on the third floor and he's jumping off the railing into five feet of water in this guitar shaped swimming pool in Nashville and the security guard came upstairs, got drunk with us and called down to the front desk and was all, "Man, they're cool. These guys are cool. They're all right. They're in a band. They're supposed to do that shit." He'd hang up the phone and go "Can I have another beer?" He'd just gotten out of prison. He'd been in for six and a half years and the parole board had gotten him the job at the hotel.

B: Six and a half years for walking up behind a Domino's Pizza delivery person with a 9mm pistol and stealing a pizza. They gave him hard time.

P: Got any more questions Darby?

D: Yeah, a million of 'em. This looks really weird. I wrote down... this is when I was sober but I was tired. I wrote earwax and I don't...

K: Have you guys ever talked about earwax?

B: Toejam.

D: Some people don't make earwax. Have you ever read anything about that?

P: Yeah. All of my hair is from earwax. That's how I did these little dreads. It's all ear wax.

K: Shut up.

P: Really, it's wax. It took forever.

D: Shut up with the earwax. Oh God! What's wrong with me? You guys are all fine. Is something wrong with me? I can't... I can't...

B: I feel perfect now.

K: So, have you guys started working on your next album?

P: Yes.

K: And it's going to be released when?

P: Don't really know. It depends on how much touring we do. If we get some really nice tour, we'll go out for a really long time, because we've been waiting for it for so long. Yeah, as soon as we're done touring, we're going to go right back in the studio.

B: We're going back in to re-track and re-mix "Chemical Imbalance".

K: That intro is godhead.

P: She [Lori Jackson] was great.

D: She's dead, right?

B: Yeah.

K: Wasn't she in *Tattoo Review*?

P: Yeah. She was a Skatenig.

B: Her boyfriend, Kozik, was a tattoo artist and he totally sleeved her within a year and covered every bit... Actually the Skatenig tattoo was the last one she did. She put it on her breast right before she died.

D: How did she die?

B: OD'd.

K: She was beautiful.

P: She was great. As far as meeting somebody and really becoming attached to them, she was one of the coolest people I've met in a long time. She was great. It was just destiny, no doubt about it. She came in and stayed out with us one night. We asked her to do the piece because we didn't have any samples for it, so she came in the studio the next day with nothing and wrote all that in an hour. Her diction was really good and she played with words really well.

[We speak more of Lori and then more on their hobbies]

D: OK, let's see what I've got here. Why don't we just go with the dogs. The dddddogs. The pitbulls or something.

P: Yeah, we're dog fanatics. Billy and I are really.

B: Do you want to see a picture of my dog?

D: What kind of dogs are they?

P: Argentine Dogos. I brought the first one into Texas. And Billy will have the first bred male.

B: His grandfather is a world champion.

K: My grandfather had one when he lived in El Salvador.

B: You guys are the first people we've ever met who know what they are. The breeder gave Phil and I these dogs for over half off what they normally cost, so we'll be the first Dogo breeders in the state. They are the most tenacious attack dogs alive. They use them to track pumas and panthers in Argentina when they're killing cattle.

K: What are the dogs names?

B: Billy the Kid.

P: My pitbull's name is Grunt. My Dogo's Gringa. They're tracking dogs.

B: Trainers take them out in these fields, with these attack dummies and...

[Phil grabs tape recorder and talks privately into it]

P: They're all fucked up. We're here with this damn magazine and oh shit... these people are crazy.

K: What are you doing?!

P: I was just level testing. Testing one-two-three. Testing. We have lift-off.

[Billy grabs tape recorder and whispers]

B: This is the part of the interview where we tie the interviewees down to the bed. The candle wax is starting to melt down into the nipples. Don't ever let this information be released to any of the other employees at the magazine. These girls have done every type of drug since they've been in New York. They've been participating in massive oral down orgies in back alleys. They've been scoring drugs for Skatenigs for two days now.

P: And we're not done with the flogging yet. The flogging will continue.

B: Canings will commence at dusk.

P: Spankings for all.

B: And then we bring in the chickens.

P: No! Not the chickens!

[Lots of inaudible speak. Lots of photography going on.]

D: I feel like your songs are... In a lot of them you mention the name "Skatenigs". You sing about yourselves a lot.

K: So, maybe they like themselves.

P: Yeah. We're very popular amongst ourselves. We buy all our records.

B: That comes from our rap roots.

P: Like, 'Horny For Evil' and 'Roadkill'. Those songs are like little stories. Little mini-horror movies.

B: 'Roadkill' was our soundtrack to the horror film that we haven't been able to afford to shoot yet. And 'Horny For Evil' was the 900 number for little boys who...

P: Have a thing for their mom.

K: Really? There's a 900 number for that?

B: No. It's our song.

P: It was an imaginary thing.

B: That's what the song's about. A kid who's so mad 'cause his mom won't pay attention to him anymore so he feels like he can commit genocide by masturbating because he's killing hundreds of thousands of sperm cells each time he masturbates over the phone.

P: Whoa.

P: That's what the phone call in the intro is – a guy talking to his mom while he's playing with himself.

B: You try to give a visual image through an audio assault to explain whatever you're thinking about. So, we don't have one mission. We're not Consolidated. We're not Fugazi... We're currently working on a new country song about Mexican Stumblers, the love biscuit you just took, so maybe we'll include part of this experience in the song.

[Darby and Phil talk about Joe Christ, a stag film with Snow White and the Dwarves, and other dirty movies.]

K: Your sound is really distinctive.

B: Distinctive?

K: Yeah! It's totally distinctive and the music goes so well with the lyrics. I was wondering if you are happy with that sound? Do you have any plans to change it?

B: For that first album and for what we knew, that was a good sound. But, now we've learned so much more, and this next…

P: We're a much better band musically.

B: There is no goal when we go into the studio of "We want to sound like this." We have certain specific achievements that we'd like to make, like with guitar sounds and drum sounds and we have the capability now through everything that we've been building up in our studio in Austin to where we can create drum sounds that have never been as heavy. And we can create guitar sounds that no-one has heard, and as long as we keep doing that… It's like, all the bands that you think about… there's not a lot of cool bands that we've dug for a few years. But, I think back to when I was a kid, like Pink Floyd and shit like that. If you're not into them, you can still recognize that their sound was so distinctive and so impeccable but it was also always evolving. You always could recognize that it was them evolving. That's very important to us. You have to keep challenging yourself.

While we're on the topic of livestock, we would like to send a message out. Don't pet your chickens. Touch them.

K: Or you could be like the Ramones.

B: And that's another reason why the change in personnel over the last few years hasn't been a negative thing at all. It's a positive thing, because we're always looking for outside influences – people with ideas that are very unique and if we can incorporate those into the ones that we already have, then you're creating something new.

D: What audiences do you attract, now that you've started touring?

B: The ones up front, foaming at the mouth… We're starting to attract a lot more metal kids, a lot of the hip hop crowd, industrial crowd. Our record company promotes us as a metal band, our publishing company promotes us as an industrial band. Our manager, who was Stevie Ray Vaughn's manager, promotes us as a rock band.

P: We don't care.

B: We're not any of it. We're a country band if anything. We're a folk band.

P: We're a hillbilly band.

B: We're writing folk songs for the decrepit souls.

K: What about your country band?

P: The Bottum Feeders?

B: We have about eight songs written right now and the Bottum Feeders are huge in Texas.

P: We might play a couple of songs tomorrow night.

D: Your country band?

P: Yeah.

K: You know, if you say that fast, it sounds like contraband.

P: Contra-band. Well, we do some western stuff too.

P: Do you all live together?

P: No. We've all lived with each other at some time or other.

B: Yeah, we've gone through that phase already. What else do we do? Recreation. We try to keep ourselves sane.

D: By popping little white Mexican pills?

P: No. Inner-tubing mostly.

B: Inner-tubing is a big hobby.

P: Croquet.

D: What's the best question you've ever been asked in an interview?

B: What's the best question you've ever *asked* in an interview? I'll answer that one.

K: We were asking some good ones during the sex issue. Just going up to people, out of the blue, and asking things like, "Do you suck cum out of buttholes?" And the people we asked were just like, "What?"

B: Oh! Felching. See, no one's ever asked about felching or trowling. Do you know what trowling is?

K: What's that?

B: Well, felching's where you suck the cum out of the butt. Trowling is when you get bean-dip, Frito Lay Bean Dip, and you cum up the butt and then you pack the bean dip up, and you let it ferment overnight, and then you peel the bean dip back, and suck out the nectar of the gods. That's trowling. And then there's shrimping.

K: Shrimping is overdone.

B: I think shrimping's very overrated.

D: But if you are being fucked while you are being shrimped, then it's great.

P: Well, what is it?

K: Sucking toes.

B: That's shrimping?

D: Why? What's shrimping in Austin?

P: Shrimping's felching with a straw… In Texas, we get our toes sucked all the time.

B: Toe sucking's big in Texas.

P: So, we've got toe-sucking, we've got shrimping, we've got trowling, and we have pig farming and we have love biscuits so…

K: Double entry is where it's at.

B: Well, I can only do the revolving door thing. It's like, it goes in one and comes out the other.

K: Girls can get shit from that, you know?

P: What scat? Are we talking about scat topics now?

D: When you fuck in the ass, and then you fuck in the…

K: Cunt. So, what you have to do is either use a dildo and a fuck or…

D: Fuck two people at the same time.

B: Yeah, oh yeah, I'm with you.

D: I don't know what that's like for a guy.

P: Well, the equivalent of that to a guy is a finger up the butt while you're doodling the prostate when they're cumming.

B: If you're still dabbling in fingers. I mean, if you've moved up to the more higher powered gear…

P: You shoot a much larger load.

B: An anal plunger along with a nice, tight pussy.

K: Kegal exercises. That's what girls have to do to get strong cunt muscles.

P: Would you like to dance on stage?

D: No.

P: How about swinging from a bungee cord?

D: Swinging from a bungee cord?

P: You hang, we suspend you by padded cuffs, by two bungee cords, and bounce you around the stage.

K: Do it Darby.

D: But I get seasick.

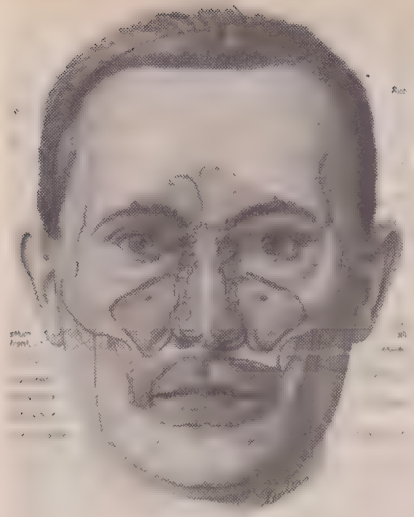
P: No, you wouldn't get dribbled. You'd just get an occasional bounce and a spanking over here and a spanking over there.

D: Oh.

P: Our dominatrix is very tasteful.

B: We were thinking about, for the show Saturday night, about getting a bunch of those road block things, the little sawhorses, and painting them all black with the Skatenigs logo and bad words painted on them and if we could find like five dominitrix chicks and right before the show comes on, we tie up all these young boys to the front of the stage and we come out and open with "Horny For Evil" and the chicks can just whip to the beat of the music. Is that a good idea?

This is where Kerin runs off with them to their photo shoot (or so they tell her) and although that is my intention as well, I instead find myself passed out on my face in Peter's hotel room with a bunch of Slug members with no shirts on (not a bad way to wake up I guess). Later I am told of a number of things that I supposedly did that fuzzy day, but luckily I don't believe anything that's not on tape. It's a hard life, being a Skatenig. –Darby



SMELL:

There is a fruit in Asia that is considered the most delicious on the planet. It does, however, smell utterly repulsive, described as a melange of shit and pus (hey, at least it don't smell like vomit!). Combined with such a smell is a "custardy" consistency. Even **nose-holding** won't help prevent the sudden clearing of the palate. On the outskirts of Western cuisine, pigs are used to find the slightly less-repulsive, absurdly expensive truffle. Pigs can smell truffles because truffles ooze androsterone, a **pheromone** or sex attractant of wild boars (also secreted by men). These sexual attractants from the animal world haven't been proven by scientists to have a strong involvement with human sexuality; then again, being a scientist hasn't been proven to have a strong involvement with sexuality either. The male emperor moth can detect a virgin female 7 miles off, but some 6% of the human population cannot smell a woman downwind (no telling if your dog does). **Trimethylamine** is the fishy odor of the human vagina (if you'd rather blame a chemical). Standing upright, and, therefore, getting our noses above the level of female genitalia, is considered by some evolutionists to be the ultimate evolutionary milestone. Some who are incapable of smelling certain smells (**anosmia**) also lack sexual interest. Many individuals, perhaps not initially attracted by smell alone, consider smell's impact critical to the enjoyment of their partner. But most Americans do not directly smell the sex organs, sweat zones, or anus of their partner (or themselves), if they can help it. Our sense of smell may be on the wane. Our smell system shuts off after a few minutes exposure to a smell, so city dwellers have very poor **smell definition** compared to country dwellers. A substantial increase in the **ambient level** of the chemical is required to trigger a renewed awareness of an **accommodated** substance. You can only smell things which are in a gaseous state, or which volatilize readily (like **isovaleric acid**, the sharp smell of sweat). Perfume has to be sprayed on, and continue to evaporate when heated by the skin. With aging, it takes more and more perfume to reach accustomed levels of smelliness. Eighty percent of older Americans cannot smell any of the perhaps 40,000 smells possible. Most likely their receptor cells have died. The same thing happens to our sense of touch, our skin becoming progressively less sensitive all the time. You can accelerate the process, though. The nerves that receive smell dangle into the nose between the eyes, like the exposed roots of a tree. They exit the brain for the free space of the upper nose through a net-like bone called **the cribiform plate**. This thin, Swiss cheese of bone is a precarious arrangement. **Snuff, or "insufflated" drugs**, and their associated chemical residues and adulterants, can degenerate these nerves (once their mucus coverings are burnt away) and actually cause death due to direct poisoning of the brain. The nasal sinuses are outfitted with curved bones that increase this risk. They form a biological **turbine**, driving and concentrating smells and inhaled substances into the upper nose. In "lower" animals, these so-called **turbinals** are much more elaborate, improving smell but also helping cool the animals' sweat-glandless bodies through their noses. You may not want to cool your mind too much through your nose. —Paul Iannone

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PHOTO: CHARLES PETERSON

[L TO R] KURT BLOCH, LULU GARGIULO, NATE JOHNSON [OF FLOP, PICTURED ALTHOUGH MIKE MUSBERGER/POSIES PLAYED DRUMS ON THIS TOUR], KIM WARNICK

Dave Ehrlich: Okay. I was trying to do this thing the other night where I figured out what cereal each Sub Pop band would be, and...

Kim Warnick: What Cheap Trick song?

No, cereal...and you guys were Boo Berry.

Lulu Gargiulo: Oh, no. Boo Berry? Ohhh.

Well, yeah. Because you've been around forever, you're crunchy and sweet and essentially harmless.

LG: Sugar Smacks. Definitely, no question about it.

Kurt Bloch: We'd be oatmeal, 'cuz we're sloppy and crappy!

But in no way are you Count Chocula, 'cause he was evil. The whole band boos and hisses at the mention of the much-despised Count.

Mike Musberger: Who'd be Count Chocula then?

I guess Tad would've been.

KW: Now he's in Mudhoney! [everyone laughs at this]

I was wondering about how you feel when you get all these reviews that claim that your sound has "matured" or whatever, or about when you get tagged as having never progressed at all...

LG: Oh, it's totally stayed the same.

KB: And changed.

LG: ...and changed.

KW: We've stayed the same but we've gotten better at it, better songs.

Have you ever made a conscious effort to alter your sound, or change your direction?

KW: [shocked] We don't have conscious efforts, not a one!

KB: While we don't really make a conscious effort to do anything, we still want to make the records and be the best we can, but at the same time, we don't really have to do the same things that other bands do. You know, get a major label deal...

Have you ever been approached?

KW: [proudly] No.

MM: That's not true. Eddie Rosenblatt wanted a bunch of Fastbacks stuff.

KW: Who's that?

MM: He's the president of Geffen. He called up Sub Pop and asked for a bunch of stuff.

KW: And where did that get us? What'd he get?

KB: They served him a warm diarrhea milkshake for breakfast!

To go with his Boo Berry.

KB: We have never been taken out to dinner by anybody!

Uh, Beat Happening gets this a lot, but you know how-

KW: How they're so naive and innocent?

[The whole van explodes into mirth at this].

Well, you're all obviously past being 15 years old, but you're constantly seen as having this teenage quality, this sound.

LG: We don't try to sound innocent, we try to sound rockin'!

KW: We are punk rock.

That teen quality is a really cool thing to be able to hold on to, but Calvin [BH] always seems perturbed by that take on them.

KW: You know what? Calvin is perturbed all day long. He was born perturbed, but we love him.

LG: [still sore] The only time I got perturbed is when you brought up Boo Berry.

From the very beginning.

LG: [laughs] From the word go.

Do you think people have an aversion to sweetness in music, like they're pop-phobic?

KW: They're starting to like it more, I think.

LG: All of the good pop bands, nobody liked.

KW: But people are getting sick of all that crappy, slow, monotous bullshit.

[laughing] So you're not big Codeine fans?

KW: No, no, Codeine's fine, that's not what I mean. I'm talking about that non-melodic bullshit that's out there.

KB: There's cheerfulness in our stuff, but it's never that cheerful.

It's never asinine.

LG: But we're pop, we're definitely pop. But all the great guitar pop bands, nobody liked.

KW: What about the Three 'O Clock? Now there's the greatest band in the world. Michael Quercio's the best.

LG: Another one's Cheap Trick.

Well, everyone's finally admitting it now.

KB: They were always great.

Terri from the Red Aunts says she hates pop music, but how can you? It's what good songs are built from.

KW: She said that? She hates pop music? Well, I hate her. She's a liar, a liar, I hate them now!!

LG: She plays guitar like a girl!

How's that?

LG: Like this. [pretends to be holding a pick, with pinky sticking way out, like from a tea cup or something] And they never strum the whole guitar, just like three strings at a time.

KW: [screams] Women are so retarded!!

Do you feel any sense of pressure, what with all the press and attention you got when you signed to Sub Pop?

KB: We're not pressured by anything, because we were around way before Sub Pop was. If anyone's gonna be putting pressure on anyone, it's gonna be us on them! WE'RE GETTING OLD, MAKE US FAMOUS!

So you all met in photo class in high school?

KB: Me and Lulu did.

LG: We used to take pictures of Queen, Lou Reed and the Ramones when they came through town.

KB: And everyone was scared of Lulu, because she had this giant-ass afro, and always ignored the photo teacher. She would just go right into the darkroom at the start of class, not stay for any part of the lecture, and tell the teacher to shut up. She'd bring her tape player in and listen to David Bowie and Earth, Wind & Fire!

KW: Things are a lot more fun now than they were.

Really?

KW: Yeah, like in the last three years or so.

Why's that?

KW: Because we're old and we don't care anymore!

KB: We're more punk than we ever were!

So you don't practice as much as you did?

LG: Oh, no. No. We have to listen to our records to figure out how to play the songs!

[end]

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MUSIC CONVENTIONS:

RIGHT ON KEY OR IN NEED OF TUNING?

BY KERIN MORATAYA

Got some vacation time coming to you and don't know where to spend it? If you're a music fanatic, the thing to do when you get time off in the Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter is shell out the bucks for a plane ticket and a nicely laminated music convention badge. Their variety is equal to that of Baskin-Robbins': from "Indies Only" to "Major Label Mania", in Austin, NYC, Olympia, or Philadelphia, there's a conference to cater to your particular musical fetishes. Most conferences contain a healthy balance of independent and major labels acts and representatives that have peacefully co-existed for some time. Lately though, it seems that more and more people are dissatisfied with what some think is an unfair catering to major labels. Some believe that certain conferences, such as CMJ, were started to showcase independent label talent primarily and have since lost sight of that goal, thanks to major label money. This has led to some resentment towards the bigger conferences as well as a fair amount of dissatisfaction. That would explain the growing number of "independent only" music seminars starting to pop up. However, are these newborns capable of surviving without the cash flow major labels assure? And is the presence of major labels really to blame for what some call "the decline of music conferences" or does the blame lie elsewhere, possibly within the planning boards of each organization?

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

The indisputable giants within the musical marathon multitude are the New Music Seminar (NMS) and the College Music Junction (CMJ), both held in New York City. They the longest running and heaviest attended conferences and are frequently credited for launching band careers (some success stories include Jane's Addiction, Concrete Blonde, and Helmet). Both offer an amazing array of panels and workshops led by some of the industry's most interesting individuals and book hundreds of major and independent acts for their showcases— the undeniable main attractions—drawing crowds of 100,000-500,000 people a year. The third most popular conference is South By Southwest which takes place in the Spring of each year in Austin, Texas. Roland Swenson, SxSW's Managing Director describes it like this: "I'd say ours is different and the big difference is that it's held in Austin, Texas which is a small, friendly city with lots and lots of live music that happens year round. It's cheap, and it's fun." An estimated 22,000 people flocked to SxSW's music showcases last year, with an actual 4,000 attending the seminar. With registration fees running from $85-$380, these conferences are the definite money makers.

THE CONTENDERS

Though not as monetarily successful, there are several smaller music conventions which have managed to draw a respectable amount of attention and attendees, the San Diego Independant Music Seminar and the New York University Music Seminar being two. Both offer almost the exact same packages as the bigger conventions, though they tend to attract a younger, less "professional" crowd. The main difference is that they tend to cater to smaller labels and take an "independants only" policy when booking bands for their showcases. IMS Director, Gary Hustwit, explains: "It's about independant music, but anybody can come. There's no major labels bands playing, no major label showcases. All the bands that play are strictly independent label bands or unsigned bands. We might have a couple of major label people on panels because the people who attend want to know about them, and I think it's good to contrast the two. It's good to be able to see the differences between them." While many applaud the seminars' efforts, others claim these conventions do little to help bands' careers and view them as useless. "The NYU thing was such a joke," says NLM Publicist, Matt Sweeney. "It's just a bunch of stupid college kids, trying to get a hobby going." Katy Krassner, CMJ Organizer, has a different outlook: "I think it's a nice try. If more people didn't think of it as a joke, it could have potential." Some contend that the San Diego IMS, though not catering to the major labels, was still directly responsible for the major label signings of ex-Headhunter bands Rocket From the Crypt and Drive Like Jehu.

MUSIC CONFERENCES IN GENERAL

"Because it's sort of a tradition now, and they've been going on for so long, there are certain stale elements that are hard to avoid when any event becomes institutionalized" muses Paul Somerstein, CMJ's Music Coordinator, when asked about the purpose of these conventions. "I guess it just depends on your conception of what music is and how it should be. If you want to play your music to a wider audience or try to sell a million records, is a marathon the best way to get it out to people? I don't know, necessarily. I guess it's easy to be pessimistic and think that the whole idea of conventions is absurd. But practically, it's useful and it gets a lot of people, who talk on the phone to each other all year round, together in one place. A lot of business can get done... and bands have gotten record deals out of it." As true as this may be, there are also many aspects of the larger conferences that are frequently complained about and criticized. For starters, there's size. "The NMS has just gotten too massive, unwieldy, and unpleasant," complains *Sassy* writer, Kim Francis. Matt Sweeney adds, "When you get to the actual convention at the NMS, you bum out so hard. You feel utterly useless, overwhelmed, insignificant and, basically, everybody else feels that way too." "The thing with NMS", explains NLM publicist, Steve Martin, "is that it got too big and, apparently, some of the people that founded it wanted to make it that big. It's too bad, because it was a good thing. But now, they're trying to scale it down and they're trying to come up with panels that are a lot more focused than they've been in two years." Which brings up another subject of much debate.

THE PANELS

A staple of all conferences, panels are the part of conventions that inspire the most disapproval. Called everything from "boring" to "dinosaurs", they even incur criticism from panel participants. One main gripe is lack of direction. "I've never been to a panel where what was supposed to be discussed actually was," says freelance journalist, Vincent Chigolini. "Panels just seems to be people promoting themselves." Frequent panalist Steve Martin agrees. "I think a lot of them are just a bunch of people up there jacking each other off but, rarely, there are panels that do contain informative substance. I think it's a misconception for kids who think that these seminars are the magical gateway to a music business job or a big gig. They're all just a big cocktail party. To me, the point of me speaking on a panel

QUICKIE CHART TO MUSIC CONVENTIONS	NMS	CMJ	SXSW	IMS	NYU
PRICE	$250 - $380	$85 - $235	$135-$250	$20-$40	$20-$35
LOCATION	NYC NY Sheraton	NYC Waldorf-Astoria	Austin Convention Center	San Diego	NYU NYU Campus
TIME OF YEAR	Summer	Fall	Spring	Winter	Spring
# OF PEOPLE THAT ATTEND	6 - 7,000	5,000	4,000	1,000	500 - 1,000
EVENTS	Keynote Address Panels Showcases	Keynote Address Panels Showcases	Barbeque Keynote Address Panels Showcases	Panels Showcases Tradeshow Workshops	Panels Showcases Workshops

Note: Conventions catering towards other musical preferences do occur (e.g. metal, country). Those listed are felt to be more pertinent to our readership.

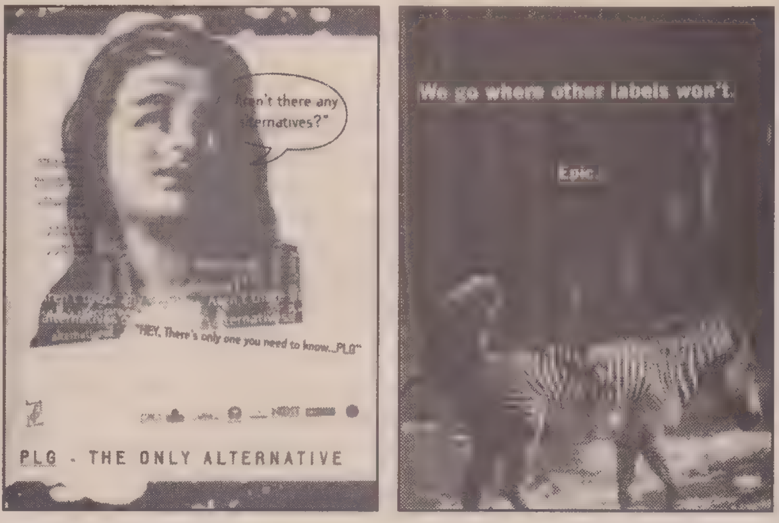
is so that someone worse doesn't speak on it." Kim Francis also believes that "...in general, the panels are all over the place. I just can't imagine why people would actually spend money to go to these things. I went to an A&R panel for five minutes and it was such a fucking bore. It was really depressing because it was crowded with all these young people who probably spent more money than they could afford to come down and listen to these people tell them how to get into A&R, and it was just absurd, because the panelists were the ten most inarticulate people in the world. Nobody was learning anything, and I really felt bad for the kids who thought going to one of these things was going to help them get ahead." Paul Somerstein gives his opinion: "I think panels are incredibly stale, a lot of ours included. Unless they're going to be revamped, I don't think we should even have them anymore, because the whole idea of talking about music... It just kinda rubs me the wrong way sometimes." Although Somerstein admits that "...a lot of the panels are tedious and boring, I also think that the audiences don't want to extend the rigor that goes along with making observant comments. The tone is always so informal and, yeah, it should be fun and loose but I think there's a tendency to get so informal that people think 'Oh, we're here to have fun and fuck around.' When I go to a panel, I don't want to see people fucking around. I want to see them thinking and taking into account what's coming out of their mouths and not just spewing things out before they think about them."

One conference has tackled the problem of boring, tiresome topics with a light-hearted approach. At this year's SxSW Conference, participants found some unorthodox topics mixed with the standard ones. As Roland Swenson explains, "We did a panel on barbecuing, we did a panel on the Kennedy assassination, and we did one on groupies that Pamela DesBarres spoke on. One that got a lot of response this year was a role playing thing called 'Elvis vs. Colonel Tom'. We had people pretending they were Colonel Tom, Elvis, and Elvis' lawyer and they argued for an hour and a half. It was really fun. We certainly have our serious panels too, but we try to stick different ones in there, stuff that's a little offbeat" Somerstein doesn't see this as a solution for CMJ. "I'd like to diversify the topics but then you get people complaining, 'This isn't about music'." He goes on to explain why he views panels as a give and take: "Structurally, it's kinda fucked up because the same people in the industry go to these things year after year but there's always a new audience coming up, and what may seem boring and obvious to a lot of us may give them information that they've never had before, so it's almost like you're not even on the same level. You have freshmen or sophomores in college just becoming radio station directors, and they need the basic information. It's not that these kids aren't smart, but there's sort of a disparity in knowledge. What to us may seem a given, or cliché, may just spark an idea in some kid's mind. But yet, there's a call for more specificity of topics for the people who have been doing it for so long – the industry people. You have to try to balance those two out." To preserve the money making ability, the panels must have a broad appeal, as opposed to being specific. Of course, there are other ways of bringing in money...

PAYOLA

Even the best intentions can fall prey to the money machines, as people higher-up in the conference ranks have found out. "Conventions have got to stop looking at this as corporate and start looking at it for what it is," asserts Katy Krassner. "It's supposed to be music discovery, it's supposed to be a music convention, it's supposed to be 'new music'. It's too corporate, that's what I think the problem is." Others agree and there is much whispering and speculating on the amount of money that changes hands between label and conference heads, securing particulary coveted showcases for certain bands, but those who know are reluctant to talk. "I sometimes feel that conventions are this unmanageable beast," begins Somerstein, when asked about back-office dealings. "It's hard to control, because there's a lot of money in it and a lot of interests and it's really hard to just chop through a lot of bullshit. You have advertisers, and that's going to compromise you a little bit." Steve Martin sheds a bit more light on the subject: "This is how the payola thing works. The real, real big advertisers present a show like it's a party with the band playing. And the conference planners make sure it receives tons of promotion, ensuring a huge turnout and mass exposure for whatever band happens to be playing." At a certain conference last year, one label supposedly paid conference heads a five figure sum to secure a premium showcase. When asked if SxSW takes part in these types of business dealings, Roland Swenson answered, "As far as our schedule goes, no we don't sell our showcases to labels. Now, do some labels come in and rent a space for the afternoon, and have a band play, and invite a bunch of people? Sure, that happens all the time, but it's not listed as a showcase. There's no way for us to stop it and no reason to either. Labels invented the idea of showcasing." This may be the case, but not all labels can afford the amounts needed to join in this game, which is why most players belong to major labels.

Showcases aren't the only things influenced by major label money. "I am on the NMS planning board this year," Steve Martin begins, "and one of the things that came up was Tommy Silverman, one of the co-founders of NMS, and the head of Tommy Boy Records, a major label subsidiary. One of the reasons NMS got so big and bloated was that Silverman had his own agenda – milking all the other labels and promoting his own label. A conference is going to be inherently slanted in the major labels' favor if you have a major label owner operating the thing." Was it generosity that prompted Tommy Boy to provide the 6,000+ printed leashes that held NMS badges securely around participants' necks in 1992, or was there a hidden agenda?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MAJOR VS. INDIE

Situations like the Silverman/NMS entanglement were motivating factors for the "indies only" policy adopted by the NYU and IMS music conventions. Many people who attend these functions blame major labels for the decline of quality in the larger conferences and see the majors as a threat to independant talent. Larry, editor of Genetic Disorder explains it like this: "What bugs me about the major vs. indie thing is when a band grows beyond me. I want to keep everyone to myself, and have them play in my bedroom, drink beer with me, spend the night, and then wish them 'good luck' when they leave." Some see the signing of an independant band to a major label as the end of a career. Others think this is ridiculous. "I don't view music through the prism of 'Major vs. Indie'," scoffs Somerstein. "I think it's too simplistic. I don't really have an ideology behind the way I listen to music. I'm just as open to stuff that comes out on major labels as independents or even things that are put out by bands themselves. I don't mean to put this in a negative light, I'm just saying objectively that I don't see a huge difference in the way Sub Pop operates or the way Interscope operates. They've both got product out, they're both aware of marketing. There's nothing wrong with that.

It's a capitalist society – if you've got product out, and you're trying to put it out on a fairly wide level, you have to talk to the market." Swensen supports Somerstein: "I've never adopted the 'Indies=Good/Majors=Bad' philosophy. I see some major labels being more adventurous in their signings than some indies. We always try to have some new major labels play at our event because, frequently, they need as much support as a band that's just been signed to an indie in terms of getting their name out, getting a foothold on the touring scene, stuff like that. We don't discriminate against a band just because they have a major label deal, nor do we discriminate against someone for having an indie deal. We just listen to bands, and what they're doing, and make the choices from there."

FUTURE PREDICTIONS

So what's in store for music conference afficionados? Are convention planners willing to expend the resourses (time, commitment, and money) necessary for massive event up-grades or should participants resign themselves to finding the same offerings year after year? Somerstein offers his opinon. "Is the return worth the investment? I guess it is so far, because people are still going to conventions. But there's all this talk about the recession and the music industry being hit pretty hard, and I wonder if there's going to be a reassessment of these things and the way the money is spent on them, or if they're going to become like dinosaurs and just die off." This is highly unlikely, though renovations to current convention structures also seem doubtful. As proven by the numbers of people still attending, conventions are profitable investments, regardless of improvement. Convention heads will have to look at their organization's recent achievments or lack of them, rather than their budgets, in order to decide if changes are needed. Are music conventions really about music or are they all just one big money-making party?

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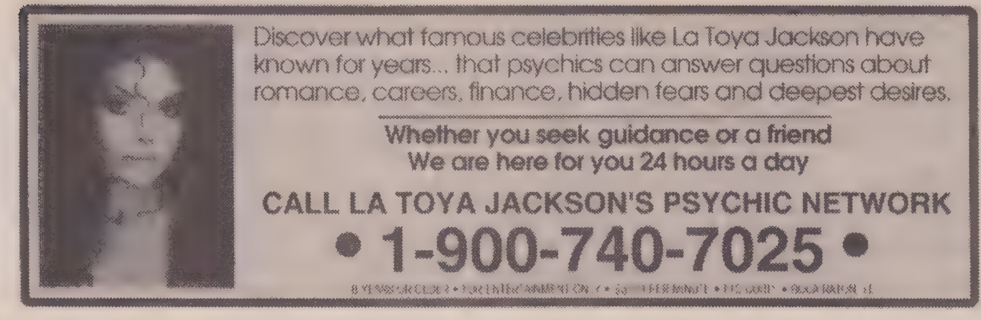
by Nina Dentata



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The other day, I was over at my best girlfriend Enrique Marie Presley's apartment eating Chin Chin shumai off purple napkins cleverly coordinated to his chartreuse dining room table. We were softly snickering, watching Madonna's old video "Deeper and Deeper", featuring the lovely Miss Sophia Coppola, when Enrique Marie dropped a wonton on the TV remote and suddenly LaToya Jackson came on the air, advertising a 900 number psychic hotline. We froze. Enrique Marie dramatically let his purple napkin fall to the floor and pinched me. Ouch. This was not a dream, but it couldn't be real. I mean, why would anybody want the same spiritual advisors as LaToya Jackson's telling them what to do? Dionne Warwick's psychic friend? Well maybe... but LaToya's? Never, oh never. My god, she was wearing a yellow oversized blazer with white piping up the sleeves over leopard print leggings. I shuddered. It was too much for me and Enrique knew it. He quickly switched the channel and started drawing a "Dad" heart tattoo on the inner thigh of his Tori Spelling doll trying to distract me into thinking that we hadn't seen it. But we had and I wanted to know why, why, why? Why did Enrique Marie let his wonton fall on the remote right at that precise moment and why did the TV go to LaToya's channel and not a Marky Mark/Kate Moss ad for Calvin Klein? Mere coincidence or was someone, somewhere trying to tell me something?

Some say there are no coincidences. Maybe, but trying to find meaning in every chance occurrence in life plus link them all together in a constantly changing future outlook almost pushed me off the deep end. But I caught myself before I fell in head first and rocketed out of my mind. Yes, I, Nina Dentata, am a recovering psychicholic. I did them all, and more. Psychics, rebirthers, channelers of ancient wisdom, past life therapists, and emotional healers. I carried around pendulums and crystals, oils and herbs; had tarot card and astrological chart readings. I started astral projecting through my heart chakra to commune with inter-galactic space people about the meaning of human existence. I almost bought an Enya CD. I mean, it got ugly. Pretty soon, I was rushing out during the commercial breaks of *Melrose Place* to get a quick fix from my street corner palm reader. Before I knew it, my money was gone, and my phone was turned off 'cause I couldn't pay the bill from my late night psychic hotline binges. My need for this spiritual communication had become insatiable. Wherever I could get it, whatever it took, I'd do anything for it, anything to fill up the emptiness of my apparently meaningless life...

But seeing LaToya advertising for psychics really shook me up. I am a believer, but when the on-air psychic told LaToya that she predicted Eric Estrada would have his own TV series by the end of the year, it got me thinking... It's one thing to believe that someone believes what they are telling you. It's quite another to believe *what* they are telling you. Simple, but for someone as naive and innocent as me, Nina Dentata, oh so easy to forget. If I look back on it now, I can see this confusion of content and form leads many of us, innocently enough, to seek out supernatural guidance in the first place.

For example, suppose you find out your lover has been sleeping with your best friend and they are plotting to steal every ounce of self-worth you have. You try to break up, but your lover insists she still loves you. Do you believe her? Is she telling the truth? Does this declaration of true love mean the same thing for you as it does to her? It's so confusing. Blinded by love, and deaf to all the friends that tell you to get out of the relationship, you decide to ask an unbiased psychic to "see" for you. You take the psychic's advice and handle the situation accordingly. Then whenever you don't like what your instincts are telling you about something, you start feeling that it would just be easier, quicker, and less confusing to just get it straight from your unbiased psychic. After all, you can't be in this relationship or at this job or in this band if it's not going to work out, if it's just going to be a waste of time. Pretty soon you stop asking anyone non-psychic anything. Why bother? You can't trust it anyway. PURE, FUTURE INFO MAINLINED FROM THE SPIRITUAL SOURCE is what you CRAVE; you won't settle for less, and you want it NOW. TELL ME NOW! I CAN'T WAIT for the fucking thing to unfold. I've got to know where this is going, SKIP TO THE CHASE, dammit. By now, it's all about time efficiency to maximize your life. And since we all know time is money, willingly we fork over our rent money for the extra time our psychic-info buys us. And with this bought info under the belt, we feel special, in the know. No, more than that, we feel *enlightened*, and before we know it something as potentially powerful as psychic phenomena has plunged us back into the corporate consumer ideology which emptied out our lives in the first place.

But for me, its over. Not only am I now virtually psychic-free, I'm probably one of the few human beings alive that can thank LaToya Jackson for anything. I'm learning to cope with not knowing the exact exchange value of all my emotions and actions, I'm learning to let go, and to leave things to chance. Actually, I'm finding that meaninglessness can be an enjoyable slice of life. After all, if you're in the know all the time, you run the risk of being too smart for your own good. And there's nothing worse than having too much perspective on your own life. You become so far removed you start needing

If it wasn't for Philo T. Farnsworth, inventor of television, we'd still be eating radio dinners. - Johnny Carson

SIXTH SENSE:

Our extensive over-exposure to this stubbornly 5-sense worldview notwithstanding, there are no doubt other actualizable potentials awaiting us in our human body time-space craft. The preceding review of the senses certainly seems to indicate **additional sensorial possibilities**. Our disturbed-monkey, culturally-slaved dream-life, may be a **didactic superexposure**, ultimately leading to a summary insight into the structure of 3-D awareness, prior to a prefigured expansion into an abstract reality beyond our senses. We may taste **the consciousness in the bottle**, instead of spending our lives reading the labels (the actual **flavor of reality** may surprise us). Some senses may be becoming obsolete, such as taste and smell, chemical senses designed for the acquisition of food and the avoidance of attack. They may be blotted out by an epochal adjustment of the contrast knob in the brain core. Then again, a **psychic aesthetic** may reclaim these senses from this **embryonic purpose**. A less-drastic **reframing** of our other senses is more likely. The modern use of the visual sense stubbornly limits it to expected objects in known space. This **skimming** is similar to remoteless TV, sitting on the couch of the body oblivious to multi-channel holographic awareness. **Proprioception**, the "touch" monitoring of our position in 3-D, is an obvious precursor to **supra-sensual modeling of the body in X-D worlds**. We may be heading for simultaneous multiple as-if-in-a-body experiences. While we can expect in the future to utilize **synesthesia** and sensorial blending, on a daily and momentary basis, for now we suffer and benefit from the phenomenon of **masking**, the blocking effect of the linear brain that keeps us walking the 3-D line. Unknown space can be made to **forcibly** take precedence, such as in moments of drug-acceleration, shock, mania, or ritual: but these methods probably involve hidden costs. Older cultures did foster gradual, sober **visionary development**, considering **visionary maturity** equal to intelligence, but even they tended to tax explorers with a **dogmatic interpretation** of the uncovered "evidence." The possibility of an **unmasking**, developing a profound and practical mind-override of brain-proposed experience (the body-electric free in the gardens of the cosmos?) remains for most a fantasy or intriguing myth. But check with your no-longer-local-but-still-nearby **synesthete**, doing heroic labwork in **hallucinogenetics**. Those who aren't particularly afraid of variations in consciousness may enjoy a leapfrogging advantage—but glimpsing such **futural terrain** tends to be harmful to the ordinary world-view, and, no lie, that has to be considered (we may become unsuited to the 3-D condition by **unsuiting** it too often). In any case, preliminary evidence suggests that futural life consists of integration beyond the **klein bottle illusion** (an apparently 3-D shape concealing a mobius-strip trick) of the human body-mind and its world. Shrinking to a **quantum state** may be the key-to-the-highway of **hyperspace**, sneaking through the **eye-of-the-needle**, becoming smaller to paradoxically become impossibly large. The beyond-but-in-the-body nature of sexuality implies that the nervous system itself may become a one-eyed, astral snake, all tongue and shining scales, once loosened from the need for a bony enclosure to resist planetary gravity. We may blossom into multiple-visionary super-beings, free of the mortal constraint our stupid commitment to the temporary landing vehicle of the human somatoform has made nearly unquestionable. In the interim, we should use our sexuality to explore **transpersonal empathy**, the possibility of exactly duplicating another's state of being. We should also rehabilitate the tabloid **ultra-sense** of telepathy, or communication through mental resonance. For this we must exchange our **status quo** mental voice for a **status vivendi**, on-line mode, discerning and cancelling out the snoring static of passive thought. These experiments require claiming knowledge when it appears, with a daring willingness to explore our **mysteries**. We may be at the doorway of an **accounting**, a rare moment when we grasp the integrated destiny of our disintegrated sensorial world.

—Paul Iannone

PSYCHICHOLICS ANONYMOUS CONTINUED

an astrological chart to navigate through a bowl of soup.

But don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to discredit the psychic, the spiritual advisor. Oh no, never. I have much respect for that gift. I am and will always be a believer that some people are more gifted than others with the ability to connect with spiritual things. *Some* people... and these people rightly should be sought out for counsel. But I've learned it's all about common sense— and if you abuse it, you lose it. So just for you, I've prepared a few common-sense tips to help you avoid the psychic overdose in your quest for that heightened vision and the perfect future fix. Now read on and don't say I never did anything nice for you.

TIP #1: Avoid having sex with your psychic. All the spirits they are communing with makes it way too risky. Although you may be tempted, what with their hands seemingly on the door to the inner depths of your soul, and all. But just remember, you're paying them to take care of what lies ahead of you, not under you. You can pay *other* people for that.

TIP #2: Don't share psychics with your friends.. . What goes for needles and toothbrushes goes for psychics. It could get messy...fast.

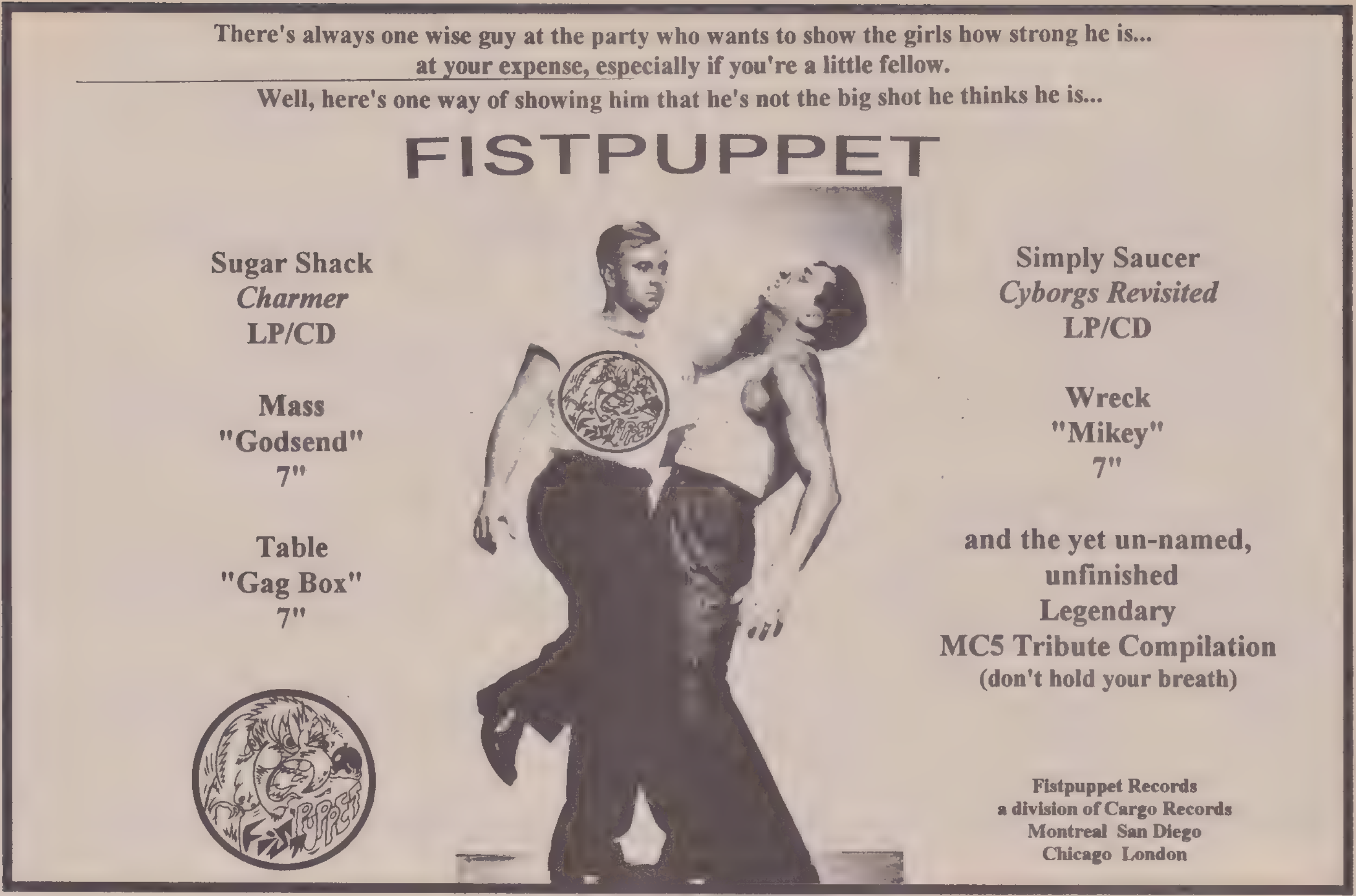
TIP #3: Beware of false prophets. OK, so maybe the Bible said it first, but still it's good advice. Be wary of those who "channel" information from a higher source that ultimately is in their favor. I won't name names, but if you meet anyone who claims to receive inter-galactic information telling them that you need to learn to trust and be more open sexually and it's their duty to help you OR you find yourself in the teepee of an astral projection guide who tells you that you have to take off your clothes to *really* experience your journey, take a moment to think before you take them up on their offers. Being the sweet person that I am, I don't doubt that these people really believe what they claim; it's only that they are extremely self-deceived. Don't you be too.

TIP #4: Moderate. Simple rule of thumb: Every day is too much. Seeking prophetic advice about what to wear in the morning, or the inability to decide whether or not to buy loose-fit *or* 501 Levi's without first consulting your astrologer are probably signs of severe dependence. Dramatically reduce your spiritual intake. Try reading *Sassy* for fashion advice or calling in sick to work so you can stay naked all day instead.

TIP #5: Don't start planning your life by what your psychic advises. I can't stress how important this is and how hard it is to avoid. Example: You're like, "Oh, my psychic says that I will meet a dark-haired person with an accent in two months who is my soul mate and will drastically change my life. " So, you don't go out with anyone for two months, especially since you haven't met anyone with an accent. Two months later, when your car breaks down and the 50 year old Middle Eastern tow truck guy who picks you up on the freeway (with his wife and kids riding in the back) asks you out, you see this chance meeting as a realization of your divined fate and readily accept his offer. If you actually bear three of his children, immediately change psychics. (If you are a man and bear three of his children, call BID and leave your psychic's number on the machine for me.)

TIP#6: Trust your instincts. Why expend the effort asking a psychic something you already know? Say you've been asking someone out for a few months, but every time you make plans they somehow seem to cancel because they get sick; they have to pack for a trip; they are going to the zoo the next day; they got asked out by someone else... whatever. Before you rush off to find out from your psychic if this person is in your future, ask yourself, "Is this how someone really into me would act?" Well? Well? Face facts, honey. I didn't say it would be easy. Hey, reality ain't for pussies, so grow up and start thinking for yourself. Except, of course, when you listen to me, Nina Dentata.

Houston... Tranquility here. The eagle has landed. -Neil Armstrong



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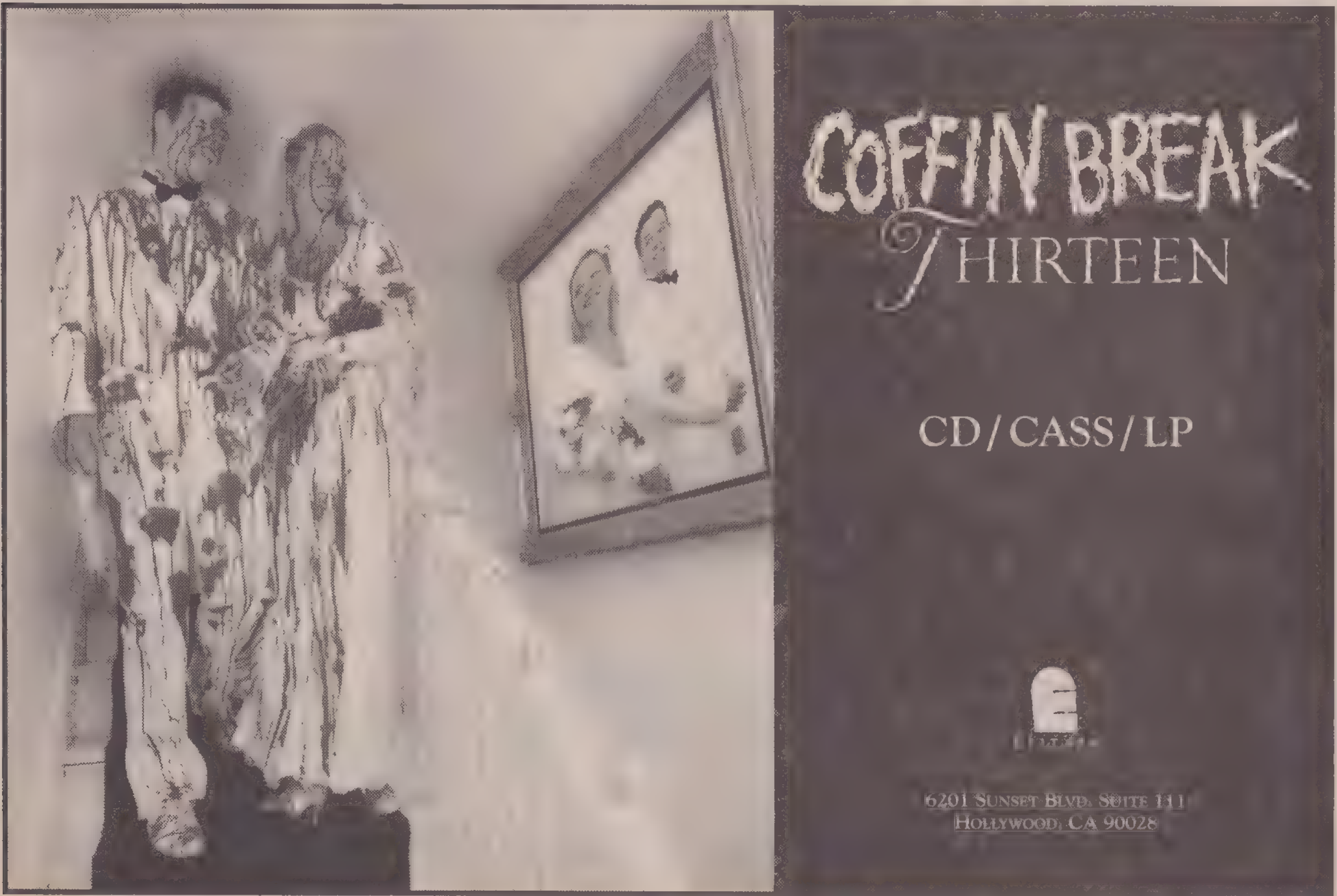

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destiny's trip

Real life by Destiny Itano. Compiled by Darby.

It happened long, long ago, when I was a little, little girl. I was two and my parents and I were living in a truck, kind of commune hopping… My parents were 24 at the time…. We were traveling around in our truck.

THE UNTIMELY PIT STOP

A friend of my parents was pregnant, but she didn't really remember when she got pregnant, she was not sure how far along she was. My mother, who was a nurse, and this other midwife were taking turns staying with her over a two month period. They figured she would probably have the baby in this block of time.

So at this time we were staying at her place in Northern California, in the Redwood Forest, probably a 30 to 45 minute drive from the nearest town. There were a couple of houses next to each other, near a river.

DESTINY POPS A BUTTON

It was only the second day of our stay. Sometime in the morning, my Dad went out to chop some wood, and I was playing in the button box upstairs. My mom came in and saw me put something in my mouth, and figured that it was probably a button. She said "give it to me." I was at that age when, if my mom said that, I would just swallow it… and that's what I did. She didn't really think anything of it until a couple of hours later when I was lying on the couch, practically comatose – limp as a doll – with my eyes open. I was just staring straight ahead, not responding to anything. My mom didn't really know what was going on, she just thought I had gotten sick or something. My dad came in and my mom told him she thought there was something wrong with me. My dad came over to me and said "Hi Destiny," and I didn't do anything, didn't blink. They were waving their hands in front of my eyes, and nothing. My dad said, "I think she's stoned. What did she do, eat some hash or something?" And my mom said, "Well, I don't know; she was in the button box. She ate something that was in the button box." So they asked the pregnant lady, and she said, "Oh, no, there wasn't anything in there. I don't think so." A half hour later – she was a real spacey woman – she said, "Oh, you know, there were two hits of Osley purple acid in there." And my parents ran up the stairs, dumped the entire box out onto the floor and found there was only one hit of acid in it. I don't know how I ended up picking that little piece of paper to stick in my mouth.

THIS IS A TWO YEAR OLD ON DRUGS

So, my parents had a brief, freaked-out discussion about what they should do. They were really freaked out, shitting their pants, wondering if my brain was fried and thinking that I was probably going to stare straight at the ceiling for the rest of my life. They figured that it was too late, that it was obviously throughout my system. There was nothing they could do. They were going to be as cool as possible and try to keep me from having a bad trip.

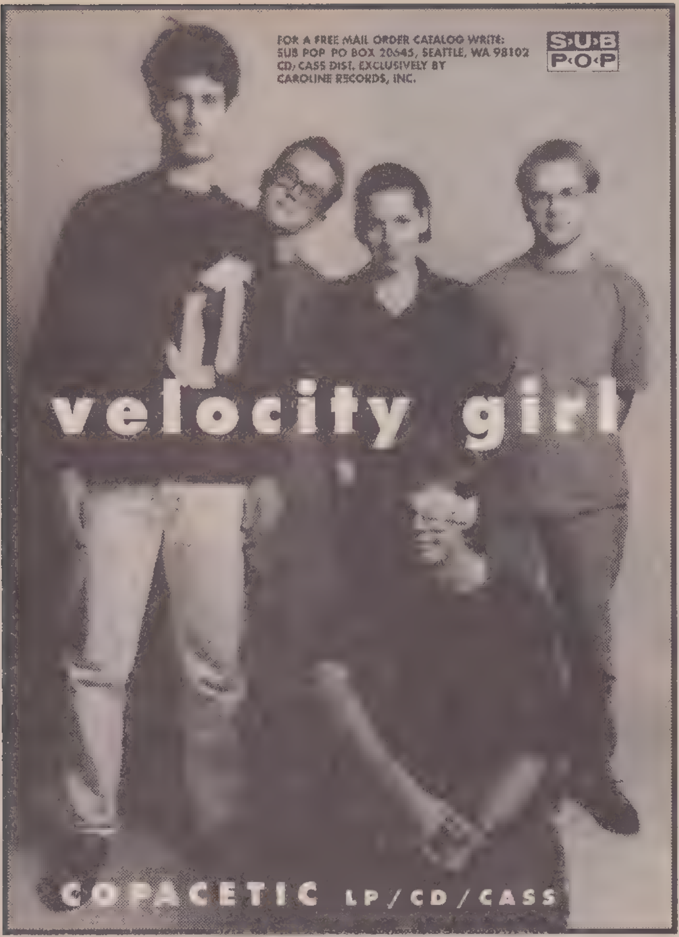
They went around and told everybody at the other houses not to come to our house unless they had to. My parents explained that I had accidently taken drugs, and that they didn't want to freak me out. My dad said he played solitaire, very deliberately, for a very long time at that point.

> **They were really freaked out, shitting their pants, wondering if my brain was fried and thinking that I was probably going to stare straight at the ceiling for the rest of my life.**

Later he tried picking me up and carrying me around and stuff. It was raining a lot, and while he was carrying me, he was staring out the window at the river. I remember looking at the river for a couple of seconds and then my eyes got really big, and I just wanted to get away from the window. The river was really freaking me out. It turned out that the river flooded the road later that day.

IS IT COOL?

I didn't really do much of anything for a long time after that. They would sit me up on the couch and I would slide down, and then just fall over. They had the fire going and I was just lying there in front of the couch. This went on for about five hours. The woman who was pregnant had another kid. He had been out all day, and didn't know what was going on when he came in about sundown. He came running in and everyone said "No,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DESTINY AND DADDY

no! Be quiet, Destiny took some drugs and we need to stay quiet." They told him to be cool, and of course he wasn't cool. Typical seven year old. He came over – ran over – and stuck his face into my face and said, "Is it cool? Is it cool?" My eyes went "boink", and as they chased him out the door, I sat up. That was what woke me up. And there was this gradual thing where I was sitting there staring, and then I would just giggle for a couple of seconds, and then I started laughing, hysterically. Anytime someone would look at me, I would just laugh.

JUST A REALLY STONED, NORMAL KID

Then I settled down; I wasn't running around so much, but I was talking – a lot. They tried to feed me, and my dad said I acted pretty much like any stoned person does. "No, that sounds terrible" – until I tasted the food, and then it was like, "Great!" I did that for awhile. And then they asked me if I remembered lying on the couch. I said "Yeah," and they asked me if remembered what I was doing. I said, "I was looking at the fire. The fire was so beautiful." And then I said, "The elephants were really nice! I was dancing with the elephants on the ceiling. They were really nice." That's what I was doing the whole time I was on the couch. They thought my brain was frying but I was just dancing on the ceiling… with the elephants. I think they were too freaked out to analyze it. They weren't thinking, oh, wow, this is really cool and we want to know all about it. They were just too freaked out to be thinking like that. They were just really glad that I was acting like a normal kid again; just a really stoned, normal kid.

After a while I got up, and started walking around – before this I was just learning to walk. I bumped into somebody, and I started laughing. So I started running, and running into people, and laughing. I did that for about two hours. Run, bonk, ha, ha, ha. Run, bonk, ha, ha, ha.

SPEAK ENGLISH WITH ONE EASY LEASSON

What's funny is that somebody noticed that I had never spoken in complete sentences until then. And after that, I never stopped using complete sentences. I think it was like a trigger; all of a sudden I had all of these things I wanted to say. They would try to get me to quiet down. By this time it was late at night. I started telling them about all the different rooms I had slept in since I was born, which was really intense for them, because they didn't even remember them that well. I was telling them that I had this really nice bed that had a brown blanket, and there was this big window next to it, with blue shavings on the side and a nice curtain, and outside there was a big tree. But I mostly told them about the bedroom. My dad said I was talking about really detailed stuff, like I would talk for an hour about the bed, and then twenty minutes or so about the walls. I remembered all the way back to the house where I was born, and we only lived there a couple of months.

I was describing the little minute details until about the time I crashed. And then, that same night, that woman had her baby. My dad said she went into labor about a half an hour to an hour after I went to sleep.

THE END OF A WONDER EVENING

My parents hadn't even slept… they were up all this time, and then this woman had a really complicated birth. She had a prolapsed cord. My mom looked it up and all the book said was "prolapsed cord: hospital emergency." Nothing else. So they had to get her to the hospital, and the road was flooded out. They had to walk her… they had her on a stretcher, and it was really dark, and my father was banging on the side of this house trying to wake the people up so he could use the phone because we didn't have a phone where we lived. They called an ambulance, and the person told them that they had to send a police officer first, because there was only one ambulance and that they had to verify that it was an emergency. My parents were waiting, and my mom had her hand inside, holding the baby back, because if a baby comes out with the cord first, the baby will be strangled. They have to do a C-section.

I can't even imagine dealing with the birth by itself, or a two year old on acid by itself, but both of those at the same time…

We don't know how the baby is doing these days but Destiny is fine and well and is currently a really cool chick living in Los Angeles. Wonder what Dr. Leary would think about this?

NOTHING IS TRUE, EVERYTHING IS PERMITTED

A CONVERSATION WITH IAN REED

Ian Read is perhaps one of the more enduring artists of the 'Gothic' genre of contemporary alternative music. The Englishman's dark lyrics and haunting baritone vocals have left an indelible stamp upon the various artists and groups he has worked in and collaborated with, notably Current 93 and Sol Invictus. Ian's latest artistic pursuit is in the formation of yet another band entitled Fire and Ice. The very name is aptly titled as it implies the two diametrically opposed forces of Nature at her extremes. It's at these extremities of our corporeal existence where Ian Read performs his own brand of muse and magick. Chaos Magick.

In late December of last year I, John Big Tree, and fellow broadcaster Richard Amtower were privileged to conduct a rare radio interview with Ian Read. Ian had just arrived from England to launch a west coast lecture series on Germanic Runery including a smattering of symbolic magick (sigil) and a plethora of other techniques borrowed from the realm of occult beliefs. We all mutually agreed the interview would focus on the band Fire and Ice, the release of the new album entitled 'Gilded by the Sun' and Ian's interpretation of Chaos Magick. Needless to say, the conversation strayed from our self-imposed limits many times. [Note: This interview would not be possible without the patience and assistance of Bob Williams and the cooperation of the Illuminates of Thanateros.] By John Lewis and Rich Amtower

IAN REED

Rich: Why did you leave Sol Invictus?

I moved to Germany to study martial arts and magick under a German master of these subjects and, of course, when I left to move to Germany there was no way I could be a member of the band. So, we left under good terms, Tony and myself. When I came back, I decided that I still wanted to do music, because previously it wasn't a very great interest of mine. I was encouraged by people like David Tibet and Douglas Pierce so I went ahead and did the album and it ended up being "Gilded By The Sun". I mean, I had no concept when I started the project. It just built itself up as we went along.

R: Who helped you on the music and the instrumentation?

The bass and some of the backing vocals and the wind instruments are by Mouse. Mouse used to be in Psychick TV. She did the "Godstar" single with them and "Starlit Mire" and various live gigs including America I believe, certainly Japan. And the guitars... they're two; twelve string and also six string used on the album by W.M. Owens and mixed by Daniel Freeman who is a friend of Wayne. Wayne has a band called Primordial who also have a couple of releases on World Serpent.

R: You mentioned David Tibet. You worked with him in the past with Current 93 and you've also worked with Death In June. How did you two meet?

Well this is where it all started. I met David Tibet because we were living in the same house and he heard somewhere – I don't know where – that I was a folk singer, so he asked me to sing a song. When I started singing it, Douglas Pierce was there as well and they liked it so much that both of them pretty much at the same time asked me if I would record something with them, so I just went into the studio and did it. And that was for Current 93. I did "Swastikas for Noddy" and I was on "The Brown Book" and then Tony Waitford and myself founded Sol Invictus.

John: Your music ties-in a lot with your other interests, which are your activities in The Illuminates of Thanateros.

Yes. The Magickal Pact of the Illuminates of Thanateros.

J: I believe the name itself is a melding of the Greek words for "sex" and "death"?

Yes, Eros and Thanatos do mean "sex and death".

J: Your latest release as Fire & Ice... Is this a solo effort? You do have other musicians on here, but is it something where you have full artistic control?

Yes. This band operates in the way that Death In June and Current 93 do in that, it's my band and I say what happens, but, of course, the musicians have their own ideas and they get taken on board, but the whole project is really mine.

J: Do they also have an interest in the IOT or is this something separate for them?

Mouse is a member of the IOT. Wayne is interested in Chaos Magick but he isn't a member and the engineer, Danny, I don't think he is interested in anything but music.

J: So on these projects you have members of the IOT and you have people who are unfamiliar with it or disinterested but yet, as musicians, they still participate.

Some of the things we do are fairly controversial. I think it's unlikely that I would work with anyone who didn't have any interest at all in the occult.

J: Can you explain to me what Chaos Magick is or what it means to you?

I think it means something different to every single person involved and not involved with it. Simply said, Chaos Magick is a metasystem which predicates that religious background to any belief is unimportant. It's the belief itself that's important. In other words, you can actually use belief as a technique. You can say, "Tomorrow I'm going to believe in such-in-such" and you take on that belief because it's useful to you. I mean, if you go to your bank manager and ask him for a lot of money, it's probably a good idea to adopt a belief that you're the sort of person that he would lend a lot of money to. But this can go to far more complicated areas.

J: I take it, Chaos Magick is not a strict prescribed dogma. It's something more along the likes of the axiom, "Whatever works...will."

It's certainly about pragmatism. Pete Carroll (founding member of the IOT and author of *Liber Null and Psychonaut*) was quoted on more than one occasion as saying, "Fake it 'till you make it!"

R: How did Peter Carroll and Chaos Magick tie-in with the creation of The Illuminates Of Thanateros?

It's probably fair to say that the whole idea

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. –Arthur Clarke was initially his. He's now retired from active leadership for personal and business reasons but we're still in contact with him.

J: When did this all actually start? I think I read that it started as a group of magicians who came together one day in Germany.

That's how The Pact started. You see, The Pact was, if you like, IOT stage two. The Illuminates of Thanateros goes back to the late seventies when Pete was studying chemistry in London. He met a group of people and they started working together and they wondered "Do we want to have gurus or do we not?" Some of them said, "Yes, we do" and some said, "No, we don't" and those that said "No, we don't" were the early core of what became known as The Illuminates Of Thanateros. After that, in 1987, Pete approached me and said, "Let's tidy this thing up a bit more and make a few ground rules which we can bend as we will." Because if you don't have some sort of structure, you can't really do anything. Then it became the core of The Pact. What we now have is The Pact but, what I think you were referring to was the actual first ritual that was ever performed. It was in a volcano in Germany where they actually said, "Okay, you people have come along for a seminar and we've just done this ritual and now you are all members of the IOT and anyone that wants to stick around will. Those who don't, won't." Like any organization what you get out of it is what you put in and we're fortunate that the initial idea that we put together in '87 has proved so successful that we're attracting the best people around on the occult scene. It took us some years to build it up because there is a lot of resistance to anything new but we just struggled on and one day we decided to hold an all England meeting which was called, "U.K.haos '92" and afterwards we had a lot of people who stayed behind and expressed interest in meeting regularly. And I think it continues because we keep getting new ideas. You see, the problem is that most magical orders keep re-grinding the old stuff that's always been done, but we don't. We say, "What does man do in 1993?" We have a lot of respect for what people were doing in the 1800's but it's really not very relevant now. What we ask ourselves now is, "How can you use a telephone to do magick? How can you use a modem?" It's really exciting!

J: The status of the IOT in the United States would probably be considered a cult. Meaning, that it's not technically a religion...

Thank God for that!

J: ...It's a group of people who share some beliefs that are similar. How is this different from another organization such as 'Wicca', where they follow one doctrine? Is the difference with the IOT that you are pragmatic in that you would utilize some Wiccan belief and in turn utilize something else that may be contradictory or mutually exclusive of that belief?

We use anything that works! There's really no reason why there couldn't be a temple in the IOT that purely did Witchcraft rituals and there are many people who came from that tradition who work with us and within the Order. But, really what I'm saying is that the religious aspects are completely irrelevant. Just last year for example, I've been possessed by "Papa Legba" who's a Voodoo deity! We had a meeting in England at Samhain and we had a La Cort Indian ritual, we had Cthulthu magick from H.P. Lovecraft. It all works! You know the belief behind it is irrelevant. You can make up your own language and use that for invocations!

J: Is the IOT a pan-theistic society?

I suppose so. Yes. I would be quite sad to hear that we would have any members who believed that there was only one God! Some wit once said, "If you only have one god, then you're half-way to atheism. You don't have a goddess!"

J: Would the IOT utilize the "darker" forces as well as the "lighter" forces?

I certainly disagree with the assumption that one person or even a God can tell another person what's morally right and what's morally wrong. So, I would hope that anyone of any value juggles "light" and "dark". How can you tell another person what is right and wrong, unless you're actually standing in his or her shoes? You know it's just not possible.

R: Is there any imposition of ethics in the IOT?

Not at all. Ethics are for each person to decide for themselves. Who would set them? We do have a grade structure but those grades are not there to say that one person is morally capable of making a judgment over somebody else. It just means that they are more willing to take on greater responsibility and work and that they've been around awhile and can be trusted. I'll be the last person to say that I've have any right to tell somebody else how they should behave.

J: When you accept new members, do they start out as initiates?

Normally they start off working for some months on basic exercises as a novice and then they become a "Neophyte" and after a period of time when they've proven commitment- of course that varies in different countries and different temples- when a novice has shown the person that runs the temple that they're on the right wave-length, then they become an "Initiate" and it goes on from there.

R: When you present your lectures on Chaos Magick, what topics do you usually discuss?

It's about runes and Germanic sorcery and I'll go into any number of aspects of that along with a lot of practical work because no matter how amusing and all the rest of it could be, it's by far more fun if I can get people doing something for themselves! I mean, the way you learn is by doing. Also there is a proliferation of books now coming out. I don't think there has ever been a time when there has been as many books coming out on the occult. They're fine, and you can sit down and read books until you look like an encyclopedia, but unless you actually do something with that knowledge, you'll never learn anything. Let's face it, a thousand years ago you had people sitting in forests performing magick. They couldn't read...they didn't have any need to read! It's a wonderful age we live in because modern communication means you literally have the whole world available to you. We're living in an age now where things that were never possible before are now possible. I can go to a library and study Sumerian mythology, Indo-Germanic mythology and so on and out of that I can distill my own systems of magick, which is what everyone should do.

R: The benefits of electronic communications; computers and modems. You have modern utilities and appliances used in magick. You have that entire world to work with.

There have been rituals in different lands using modem...everyone linked up to each other.

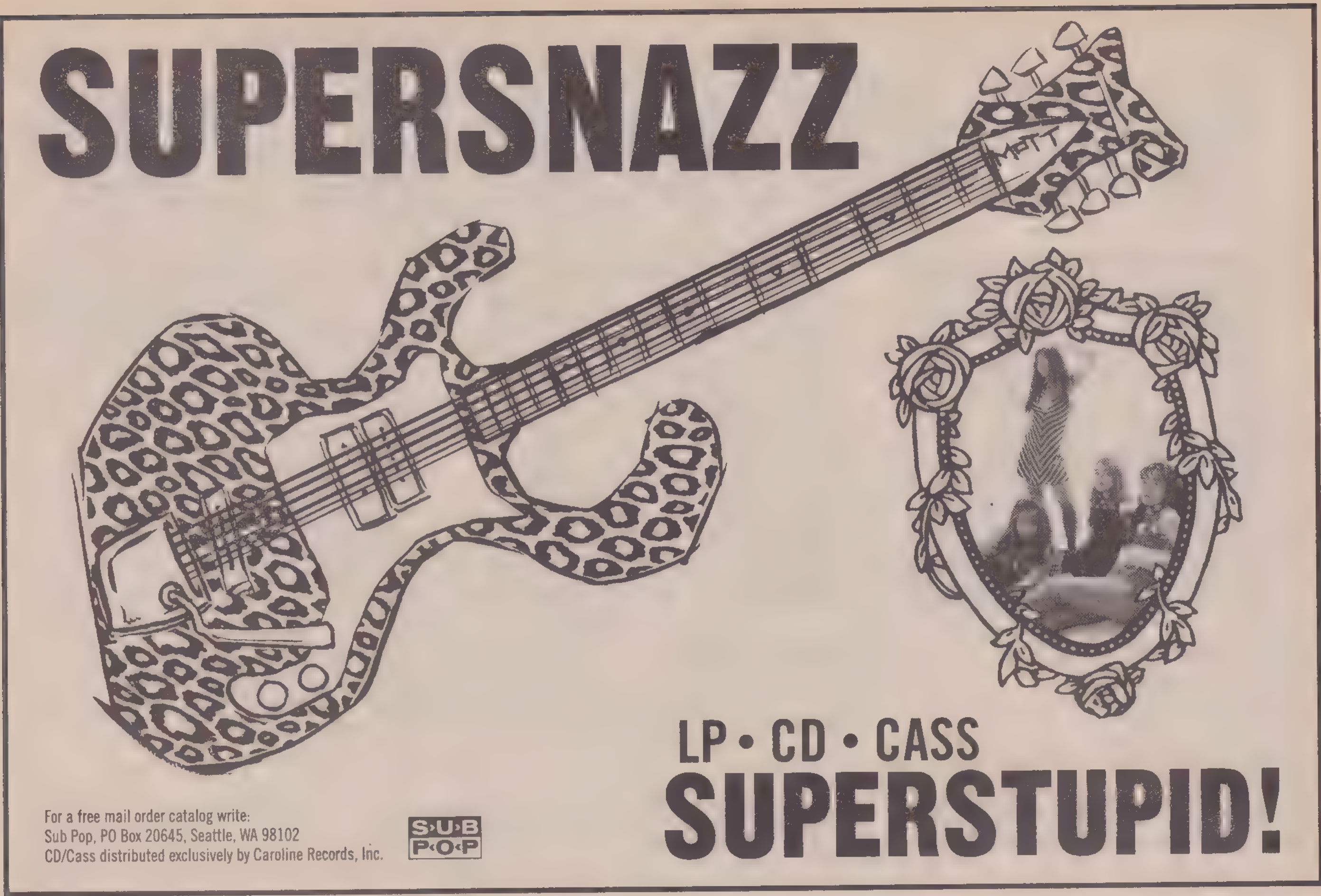
J: Magick comes to the 21st century! What was important a thousand years ago would probably have no credence in today's world.

Well, the actual magick doesn't change. What changes is the reason for performing it. Nowadays, we might need to have an element to make our computer like us. I find this is very important! Computers are absolute proof that there are sentients behind the machinery! If your computer doesn't like you, it cracks up all the time. Someone mentioned it to me as a wacky idea some years ago and I took it up and I have a service for it now that operates between myself and my computer and I find that my computer doesn't give me any aggravation any more.

J: Would you say the Germanic rituals are what you are most adept at and if so, is that because those rituals work best for you?

I think both. You know when I first got involved in magick I looked into everything and still do. I mean, if somebody else is running a temple and they want to do a ritual, I'm the first to dive in with both feet. But, it's a matter of pragmatism. I find what works best for me. If I hold a sword in my hand and call upon "Odin", I get a much better feeling than I do with other ways of working. You can't change a winning team!

For more information on Chaos Magick write to: Illuminates of Thanateros, PO Box 619, Huntington Beach, CA 92648



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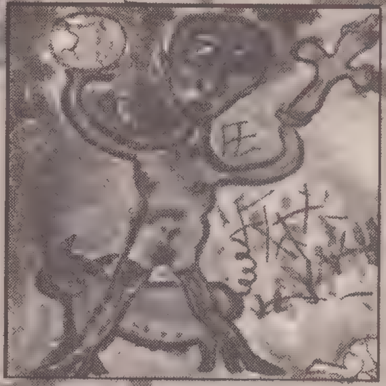

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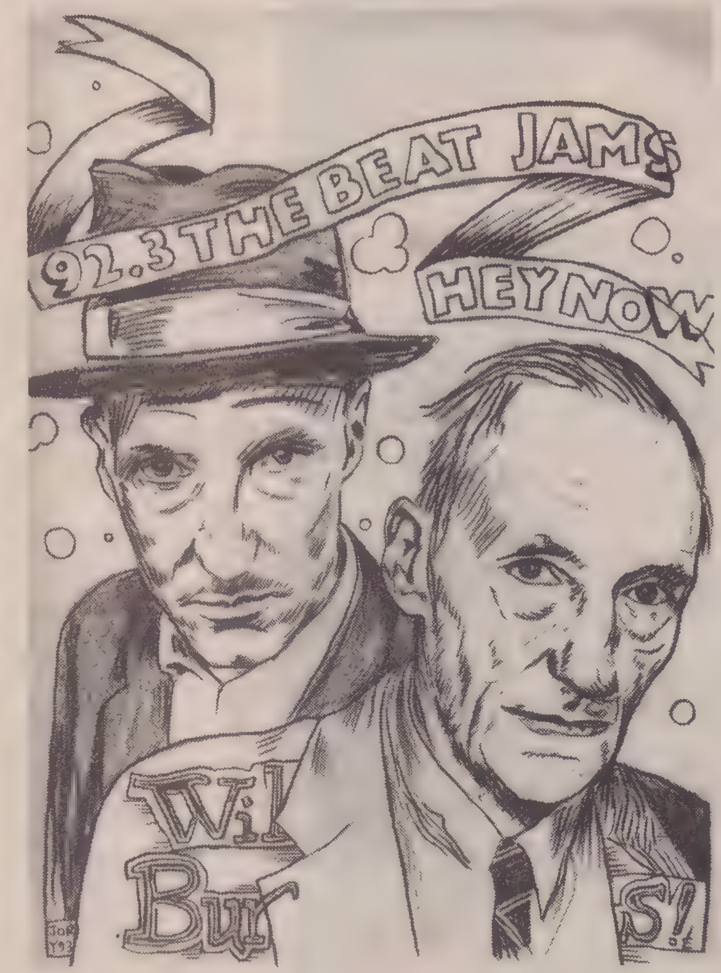
Q & A W/ W.S.B.

By Mark Ewert

I've been good friends with author William Burroughs for four years now and welcome the chance to share the following brief interview and letter. Most people seem to cherish a very sterile, legendary, larger-than-life image of the guy, and that is neither my interest in, nor experience with, either the man or his books. So here's a wee bit more down-to-earth, easy-going side of him that I hope you enjoy. The interview was conducted through the mail during February, 1993. I sent him the questions, and he promptly returned the following responses. On the top of my letter to him I emphasized: please answer these in *any* way that you desire — including making shit up, or utterly ignoring any questions that you find boring. The letter included is one from our ongoing correspondence, dated a few years ago, and one that I always found prettily written, and charming. [The reference in the first line is to a MS. of my own that I sent him, written in collaboration with S.F. author Kevin Killian.] Not meant to rock your world, I hope the following *does* give you a slightly different whiff of William S. Burroughs, who I'd like to thank right now for his very gracious participation in the interview.



Can you describe a crush you had on someone pre-puberty?
Not up to crushes right now.

A memory involving a young woman or girl?
Well, now, at the Community School we had a nice teach name of Mrs. Stout and I remember, guess it was just a pleat in her skirt, thinking she had an erection. Didn't know about women at the time.

What is your earliest, absolutely earliest, memory involving your writing?
I remember writing about the Corn Dance I saw in New Mexico and some muck about haunted castles when I was ten or twelve years old.

What do you think the novel [as an artform] will mutate into?
I don't see anyplace where the novel can go and remain a novel. (Paul) Klee said that painting (and this can be applied equally to writing) does not render nature; it renders the visible. That is, the writer or artist sees something that did not exist until he saw it and put it on canvas, paper, or whatever medium he is using. There may be, at the present time, a lack of psychic areas to explore and map and make visible, tactile and audible.

Do you know anything about where, when, why and from what the novel arose in the first place?
We can trace the novel from Petronius' *Satyricon*, a very funny novel in the picaresque tradition (like *The Unfortunate Traveler* by Nash...in the fifteenth century) – a tradition to which I feel very close. Celine is certainly in this vein.

Can you talk some about your interest in lemurs?
What attracts me about lemurs? Doctor Simmons of the Duke University Primate Center said: "I hate to imagine a world without lemurs." And someone else said that the black lemur, black with blue eyes, is perhaps the most beautiful wild animal he ever saw. Makes a man feel so much better just to look at a lemur if a man can see. [Interviewer's note: legendarily, lemurs can become invisible at will to escape evil humans.]

What other animals are you drawn to?
I like so many animals. Bush babies, tarsiers, monkeys, racoons, deer, kangaroos, foxes, mongooses, ferrets...

One or two physical injury memories?
When I was fourteen, a wooden chemical box with red phosphorous and potassium chlorate exploded in my hand. Came near close to losing it and still have the scars.

Who's a figure from American history you admire?
I had a predilection for outlaws like Billy the Kid and Jesse James. The politicians reminded me of my Uncle Ivy... "Hitler is misunderstood," he'd intone in his oracular voice. "'Why I've got nothing against the Jews,' Hitler told me. I just saw him last week."

Can you describe your scariest recent dream?
Vivid dream: an explosion behind right buttock. Woke into another dream. Same room. Full of unknown menace. I know the .38 Snubbie by my hand is useless against this danger. Wake up again back in present time. Focus. What on earth?

Remember I was reading last night about Willie Bioff, enforcer and collector for the notorious Filmmaker's Union. Willie bought his ass out and testified against his fellow racketeer...such notables as Cherry Nose Gio, and Frank the Waiter. For ten years, Willie Bioff, under the name of Nelson, lived in Phoenix, Arizona and was good pals with Barry Goldwater. Then one morn he steps into his pickup truck, tromps down on the starter and... his legs were blown thirty feet from what remained of the car and Willie.

I like dreams like that. So far from waking life experience. Nothing there for an analyst. Wish fulfillment? The fear was very vivid... but I am not Willie Bioff nor was I meant to be. Thinking back to the dream, I can feel what it's like to have a car explode under one's ass.

What did you do yesterday–from waking up until going back to bed?
Friday, February 5. After a great birthday dinner with venison aspic and guinea hen, a reception followed. Goodly crowd and no untoward incidents. So following day went shooting and made good groups. [Interviewer's

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Note: "groups" means clusters of bulletholes around a bullseye, I think.]

Can you give me a yuletide memory from before the age of twenty?

When I was nine we were all required to go to New York as guests of the aforementioned Uncle Ivy Lee who was Press Relations Counselor for J.D. Rockefeller. I didn't want to go at all. Uncle Ivy was never my cup of tea nor I his.

Did you have to go to church?

Grandfather Lee was a famous liberal clergyman with a fashionable parish full of bankers and businessmen. He died when I was six. After that I was never required to go to church. My father, Mortimer Burroughs, was a dogmatic atheist but preferred not to discuss the subject at all.

Can you describe the after-death state as you imagine it?

Probably the closest approximation would be dream life. I often have, in this closest approximation, double dreams: that is, I wake from one dream and think I am awake but I'm still in the dream. This is especially likely to occur in nightmares.

Where do you think one is the moment after death?

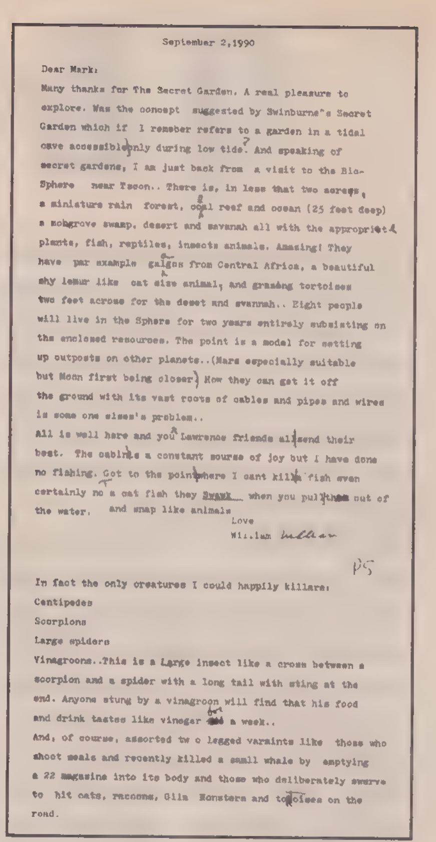
The moment of death in a violent context is often blurred and this can cause confusion and the state where one does not know that one is dead. This can also confuse a Holy Man on the case since he may have difficulty finding the subject. [Interviewer's Note: Burroughs once consulted a Tibetan Lama to sniff out the metaphysical whereabouts of a long dead friend, a not-unusual Tibetan practice.]

What do you get out of books that you don't get anywhere else?

One thing I get from books is information. Information about medical subjects from Robin Cook and other writers of medical horror. I am now reading a book called *Vital Parts* about sinister traffic in kidneys, livers, and other vital parts, even hearts. Cold, slimy doctors, the lot.

Lastly, what would be the most fantastic book in the whole world for you right now? What would it tell you?

Sometimes, I have dreams of finding a book already written, just waiting to be copied. Sometimes, I may bring back a few sentences from the dream and these are usually good. Sometimes, they may even unravel a whole chapter.



September 2,1990

Dear Mark:

Many thanks for The Secret Garden. A real pleasure to explore. Was the concept suggested by Swinburne's Secret Garden which if I remeber refers to a garden in a tidal cave accessible only during low tide? And speaking of secret gardens, I am just back from a visit to the Bio-Sphere near Tucson.. There is, in less that two acres, a miniature rain forest, coral reef and ocean (25 feet deep) a mohgrove swamp, desert and savanah all with the appropriate plants, fish, reptiles, insects animals. Amazing! They have par example galagos from Central Africa, a beautiful shy lemur like cat size animal, and grazing tortoises two feet across for the deset and svannah.. Eight people will live in the Sphere for two years entirely subsisting on the enclosed resources. The point is a model for setting up outposts on other planets..(Mars especially suitable but Moon first being closer) How they can get it off the ground with its vast roots of cables and pipes and wires is some one elses's problem..

All is well here and your Lawrence friends all send their best. The cabin is a constant sourse of joy but I have done no fishing. Got to the point where I cant kill a fish even certainly not a cat fish they Swawk when you pull them out of the water. and snap like animals

Love

William

PS

In fact the only creatures I could happily kill are:

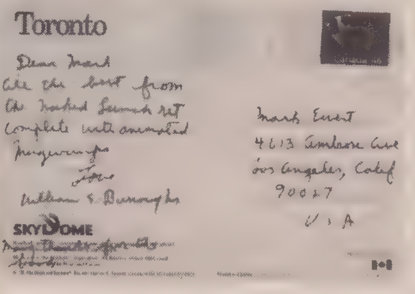
Centipedes

Scorpions

Large spiders

Vinagroons..This is a Large insect like a cross between a scorpion and a spider with a long tail with sting at the end. Anyone stung by a vinagroon will find that his food and drink tastes like vinegar for a week..

And, of course, assorted tw o legged varmints like those who shoot seals and recently killed a small whale by emptying a 22 magazine into its body and those who deliberately swerve to hit cats, racoons, Gila Monsters and tortoises on the road.



Toronto

Dear Mark
All the best from
the Naked Lunch set
complete with animated
[illegible]
Love
William S Burroughs

SKYDOME

Mark Ewert
4613 Ambrose Ave
Los Angeles, Calif
90027
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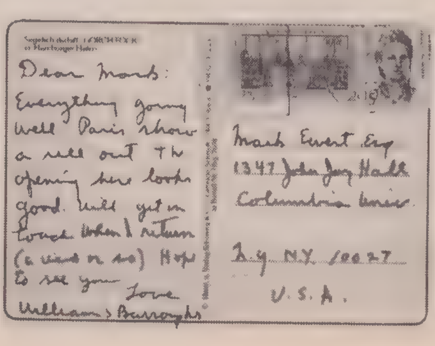


Dear Mark:
Everything going
well Paris show
a sell out The
opening here looks
good. Will get in
touch when I return
(a week or so) Hope
to see you
Love
William S Burroughs

Mark Ewert Esq
1347 John Jay Hall
Columbia Univ
N.Y. NY 10027
U.S.A.

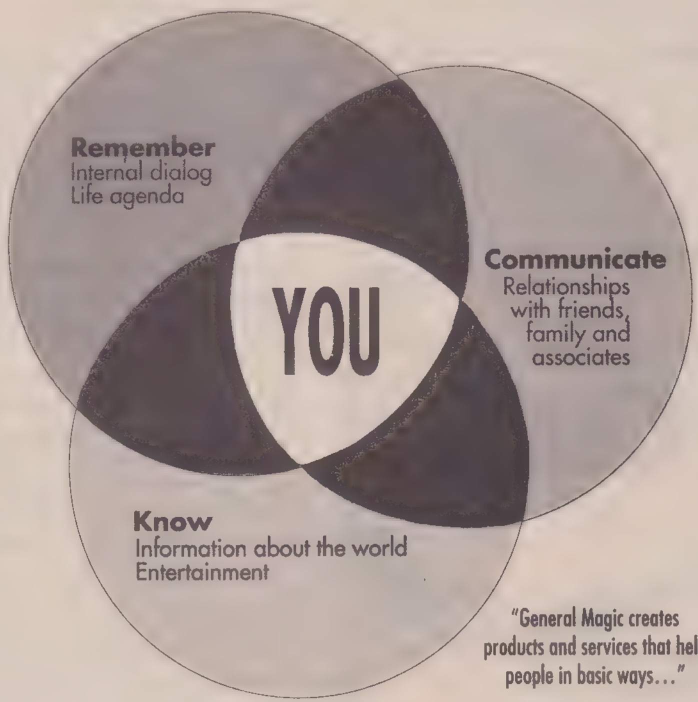
General Magic

Corporate Polygamy Spawning Illusory Technology Designed to Change Our Lives

By Michael Carr

In January of 1990, a group of former Apple employees were granted permission by Apple parent John Sculley to establish their own Silicon Valley research and development rumpus-room, incorporated in May that year as General Magic. They left an Apple perceived by many to be half-baked in its direction, to join other self-styled industry rebels in an unparalleled effort to magically transform the drudgery of the complexities surrounding our day-to-day lives. They are creating a new technological window intended, among other functions, to replace the traditional customer service windows of established institutions as we know them today. To realize this vision, General Magic has attracted sponsors such as Apple, AT&T, Matsushita (Philips), Motorola, and Sony in a venture to produce what *Wired* magazine likes to call "Alliance-ware", a blanket reference for products of various corporate partnerships.

The "wares" peddled by General Magic to date have been limited to lofty concepts fully accessorized by well-intentioned ideology. These are delivered via carefully manipulated public relations and esoteric references to "personal intelligent products and services that help people." Press materials read like the brochure of a personal-growth seminar, dangling notions of human need "to communicate, to remember, and to know." An equally attractive facade designed to avoid unsubstantiated claims in an industry "dominated by hype", is their refusal to elaborate about their projects in any detail, a reluctance to divulge anything that may create unattainable expections. Although admirable, this sleight-of-hand message masks underlying issues that full disclosure would open like a Pandora's box. Of lesser consideration is the understandable need for security to protect their interests. Greater is the concern over the Orwellian implications of virtual realities that extend far beyond the obvious conveniences that are nearly at our fingertips.


Remember
Internal dialog
Life agenda
Communicate
Relationships with friends, family and associates
YOU
Know
Information about the world
Entertainment

"General Magic creates products and services that help people in basic ways..."

TRICK OR TREAT?

A rabbit popping out of the hat presently represents more than just the corporate identity. Although General Magic representatives adamantly refused to acknowledge any release date, sources in the industry speculate that the first phase may be released by October of 1993. General Magic has developed an operating prototype, with an emphasis on software rather than hardware, the latter trickery relegated to the other companies involved in this multi-faceted project. These firms are creating their own compatible devices, units that General Magic Steve Perlman promises will not be "the Beta thing." The foundation upon which the entire concept is based is comprised of two trademarked technologies licensed separately by General Magic.

The first is Telescript, a new programming language and software for communications that promises to revolutionize the way various types of computers communicate. "Tailored for infrastructure", it will allow the user to send an "object" rather than just text to any type of computer. Telescript is not based on any current standard, and will be designed to interface with all existing systems. According to General Magic spokesperson Tom Hershenson, Telescript will "facilitate communications across various platforms among a multitude of devices, whether they are computers, or communicators, or really any sort of electronic device." It is analogous to Postscript, Steve said, "where you can describe what something looks like on a page, and any printer with Postscript can print it."

AT&T and Motorola are incorporating Telescript into their current projects. "There's something called Cellular Plan II that's coming out that's going to allow you to send data as well as voice." Steve said. "At first it will be low band, you won't be able to send movies. But that will change as demand increases, as it's used more."

Magic Cap (Communicating Applications Platform) is G.M.'s second offering, a platform for software and programs that incorporates user interface capabilites for sounds and visuals. It will initially be offered within a PIC (Personal Intelligent Communicator), licensed by Motorola, a hand-held device that is the approximate size of a box of Triscuits. Motorola recently launched EMBARC, a system that allows portable computer users to receive information and transmit it to multiple units. Magic Cap will subsequently be offered for installation to run on conventional operating systems.

In an interview with Darby, Steve Perlman outlined the basics for us: "If you had something that you had written on our device, you could send it to a PC, a Newton, an EO machine – there are all sorts of new gadgets coming out – anyone could receive these things and it would actually make sense. It might have more than just text; it might actually have sound, or animation, or graphics; or it could be a novel."

Steve explained the potential benefits of applying this technology to the average user with unconventional pursuits, e.g., someone who produces a zine. "It's neat for publishers that don't necessarily appeal to a broad segment of the population," he said. "If you've got an obscure kind of magazine, that finds its way to the back of the 'different' magazine section of a cool bookstore – you don't even make it into Crown Books because they're afraid people will freak out when they see an evil picture in there. And how big can the circulation be? There may be a lot of people who are too far from San Francisco or other points in the U.S. to have access to ideas that are not mainstream."

The publisher would send a copy of the magazine to a communications service, perhaps AT&T. The service would retain it on-line for perusal. "Suppose I was interested in tractors – and my interest was registered with the service. The service could say, 'Oh, here is *Ben is Run Over* – it's a magazine that specializes in tractor accidents." And you'd say 'Oh, great. I'd like to get a preview of that.'

You on the cutting edge of technology have already made yesterday's impossibilities the commonplace realities of today. —Ronald Reagan

General Magic continued

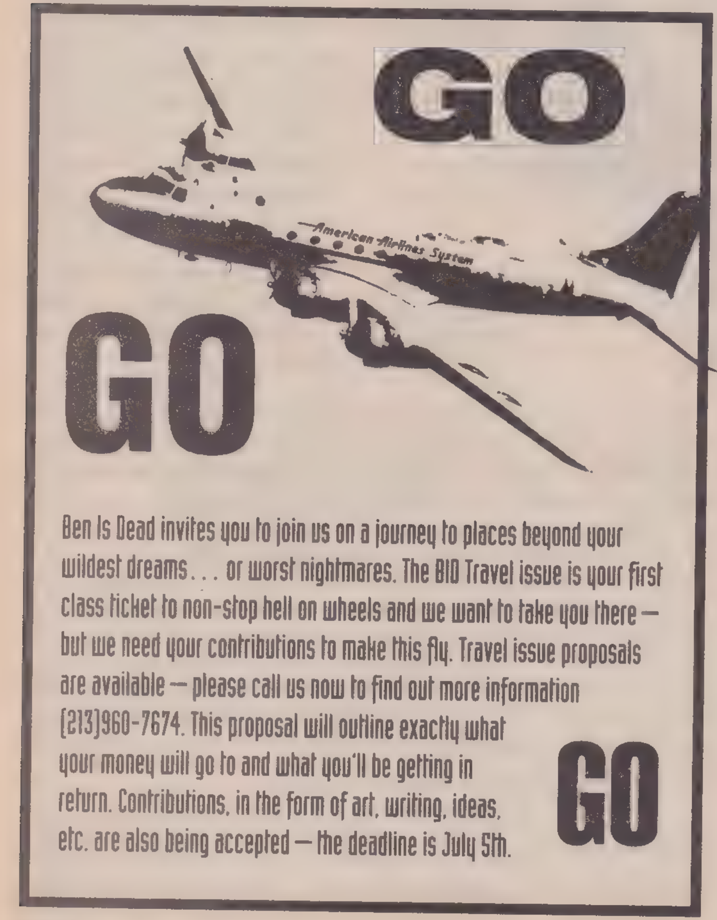
An article would come up and show this kid who was mauled by a tractor or something. You would touch a button there and say that you wanted a subscription to this thing. They would charge it to your Visa or Mastercard." Of course, they could also debit your bank account...

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE...

However vague the elementary explanations may seem, these technologies represent only the core of a brand new apple. The privileged few who have actually witnessed the fruitful activity underneath the well-polished skin of this company relate that virtual reality is virtually becoming reality. Mark Lasser, a Los Angeles free-lance film artist and computer nerd, informs us that General Magic is designing interractive programs that will remarkably incorporate the reality of the user.

Mark relates various scenarios currently being fine-tuned. The Apple Newton is using Telescript to "learn" handwriting through extensive oversampling. "When any particular document is saved," Mark explains, "the system will display it in a typewritten format on the screen, prompting the user to key any letters that the system was unable to distinguish." If a user has a distinct handwriting style, with specific characters that the system finds difficult to read, "the system will continue to match the style until the characters are recognized automatically."

Entering the on-line system, the user would see a typical American town displayed on the screen. "One of the buildings might be a magazine stand. Touch the pen to the magazine stand and the image will zoom in on the stand, and then the magazines on the racks. A number of options will probably be available, such as having it mailed to your home, or downloading and printing it from the home or office." To mail a letter, one would just touch the post office. Zooming in on the post-office, the system would open the doors and allow entry to engage in the same transactions that most people currently do not enjoy when they conduct them in person.



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Utilizing existing text-based technologies, France has offered an on-line system since 1981. With more than 6.3 million units in operation, the system is now used by nearly 30% of the population over 15 years of age. It has grown from 8,000 services to over 20,000 during the last five years alone, and offers banking, grocery shopping, weather verification, and vacation planning (including rail and air travel). In stark contrast to similar private enterprise systems in this country, Minitel is run by state-owned France Telecom and faces no competition. It is also available to customers at a nominal fee of about $3.50 per month. The monitor and keyboard units are provided by the telephone company, and therefore far less expensive than an American purchase of a computer, screen and monitor.

Although far more expensive than the French system, the General Magic Alliance promises unequivocal convenience and ease of use along with an unprecedented – for America – low, low price. Mark Lasser tells us that the hardware for the General Magic system is initially estimated to retail for approximately $800, with plans to reduce the cost to $600. The software is planned to sell in the $400 range for the initial release, with a reduction to less than $250. Declining to state these figures, Steve describes it as, "The sort of consumer electronic device that would sell in – let's say Circuit City – stores that would sell TVs, stereos and VCRs, or perhaps under-the-counter gadget items at [department stores] or whatever, as opposed to specialty stores that deal specifically in computer electronics."

GUNS DON'T SHOOT PEOPLE

The magnitude of this venture is revealed through the Alliance of mega-corporations, an unprecedented conglomerative effort to advance personal communications, and to extend them to nearly every possible aspect of our lives. As society evolves toward greater dependence upon the computer for ordinary transactions in day-to-day living, responsibility will actually shift from governmental institutions owned by the people to multi-national corporations that will ultimately have much greater control over our lives. However unsatisfactory or obsolete our relationships may be with established institutions such as the post office or DMV, the Big Brother implications of such corporate control loom large. Prodigy, a computer network service, has already demonstrated this, hiring readers that sift through material submitted to be presented on-line, censoring that which is deemed to be offensive.

Yet the principles of General Magic are described by outsiders as nearly anarchist in nature, intent on preserving individual freedom and expression, as well as the right to privacy. The big idea is to liberate the individual through mass communications. Liebling was oft-quoted by various sources as we assembled this article: "Freedom of the press belongs to whomever owns a press." Essentially, *everyone* will own a press, as the old maxims change from "a chicken in every pot" and "a car in every garage" to "a computer in every home".

Not only does General Magic plan to change the economics of personal computing, they also will alter the traditional structure of capital investment. The privately held company has engaged an experimental concept of corporations contributing money for an equity share rather than actual ownership. The owners of General Magic retain a majority interest in the company. How much protection this majority interest affords is anyone's guess.

While acknowledging the flaws inherent in capitalism, Steve Perlman still feels that it is the best ideological vehicle to perpetuate the evolution of mass communications. Competition will effect the censorship equation. If one of the companies that provides a subscriber service through General Magic is restrictive, a competing system will probably offer what others refuse. Accessibility for the average person, or anyone pursuing different ideas, is a priority that Steve emphasized throughout our discussions.

Explaining the extensive corporate involvement, Steve said, "You feel kind of beholden to them in a way. If you're a strong, independent person, you don't ever want to be that way. And frankly, we don't want to be beholden to giant companies either, but it's a reality that we all work in. The fact that the companies have the means to support you says something about their desire to help you in what you're doing, and you appreciate it, and you realize that they are people too."

They are, however, people with their own agendas and ideas about how the world should be. Corporations are traditionally notorious for manipulating the public by trotting out useless and sometimes dangerous products under the guise of societal benefit. We will be signficantly responsible for how this technology is utilized and how it evolves. As the expression goes, "Guns don't shoot people, people shoot people."

Technology is the science of arranging life so that one need not experience it. –Anon

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OFFWORLD

BOARDWATCH MAGAZINE

BUSTED

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

OFFWORLD

PART TWO: GETTING BUSTED

Offworld BBS is out of business. BID interviewed Joel Joey Jay a few years ago about his computer bulletin board system, Offworld America. Unlike most private BBSs which are run by uptight, neurotic, fascist Sys-Ops, Offworld was an anti-establishment BBS committed to Free Speech, Free Expression, and Anarchy. The board's motto was "Peace Through Communication". The combination of a Sys-Op with competent programing skills and a cool attitude made Offworld unique among it's peers. Most people were allowed on the system for free, while Joel paid for operating the system out of a big family inheritance. Last year Joel closed up shop in Los Angeles and opened up Offworld in St. Louis, out of the basement of his father's huge family estate. The system was an even bigger hit out in the boring Midwest Burroughs' Country. Entire high schools logged on, and actually got together at a few of the groovy underground nightclubs on a regular basis. There were about 3,000 regular users. The system was like a giant Mall or Park, where the Public could hang out and talk about whatever. There are hundreds of testimonials from disenfranchised, depressed kids and adults who found their first real friends on Offworld. Here are just a few quotes from the 20 pages of testimonials collected so far [errors included]:

> "Offworld has always been a sanctuary for the bizarre: A home where people who are a bit off the beaten path can feel alive and wanted as they are in few other places."
>
> "Offworld changed my life... I seriously would have no friends and... might have committed suicide... if I had not gotten hooked to Offworld" –14 year old kid
>
> "I'm shy and I can meet people on Offworld with the same problem... I've always had a problem talking to someone in person, but I could say anything here anytime... Offworld let me be myself without fearing that someone would laugh in my face"
>
> "Offworld provided a drug/alcohol free recreation... how much safer/wholesome can you possibly get?"
>
> "..all I did here was was talk to ppl and i loved it... it kept me gettin up in the mornin sometimes i thought about stuff that was wrong and it was easy for me to talk to the ppl here and to help ppl with their prolbems... i can remember 1 time when i called and i talked to this girl that was seriously considerin sewscide and i talked hjer out of it... i can also rember callin here when i wnated to kill my bro and i was seriously considerin it... and the ppl here talked me out of it"
>
> From E-2 James Kaffenberger: Color Guard of the US NAVAL SEA CADET CORPS: INAUGURAL DIVISION : "I am going to talk to some admirals in the coast guard... and [a] 3 star general of teh[sic] army... [to] ask him to try to write a leter to the FBI and try to get your equipment back."
>
> "THIS IS TO THE FEDS WHO SHUT THIS BOARD DOWN: you have taken away my world. You have taken away my freedom! You have taken away my life! Do you think you can stop porn by doing this? Well your wrong!!! IT'S EVERYWHERE!! If someone took away your home how would yu feel? BAD? Well that's how I feel! If it wasn't for Offworld I would be on the street and probably in trouble with the police... YOUR EGO OF TAKING AWAY MY FRIENDS AND "FAMILY" HAD MADE ME MAD!!!! You can't stop porn... It is everywhere you go... what are you gonna do now? Tell kids not to have sex? Tell kids not to watch t.v.? Well, they are gonna see it sometime or other! And your socilist rebelion aginst us is not going to work. Offworld WILL BE REBORN!!!!! So face it"

Last January Offworld was raided by the FBI and every piece of computer equipment Joel owned was seized (over $40,000 worth). He still has not been charged with any crime. The FBI was acting on reports from angry local parents that there was child pornography on the system. Of course, anyone who's every worked on a computer knows how easy it is to scan in any type of image you want and transmit it over the phone to any system in the country. The questionable files were uploaded by an annonymous user. It could have been a rival BBS who uploaded the images, or even the FBI itself. In general the cops aren't supposed to arrest someone for material they planted. Holding Offworld responsible is like saying if two kids were scrawling dirty messages to each other on a bathroom wall, you should seize the building the bathroom was in, and arrest the landlord. If some pervert was hanging out on a bench in a park, you wouldn't seize the park and lock up the owner for not keeping him out of there (who would you lock up? The Mayor? The head of Parks and Recreation? The Chief of Police?). The problem is that on computer bulletin boards the "bad guys" are annonymous. There is no way to trace them – well, actually, now there is with caller I.D., but that's just being implemented and callers can disable that function. Even if they didn't, the BBS would have to keep track of EVERY call that came into the system. That can take up a LOT of memory. [Note: In a similar story, Steve Jackson of Steve Jackson Games just won a case against the Secret Service alleging blatant negligence and cover-up. Mike Godwin, counsel for the Electronic Freedom Frontier (internet address: eff@well.com) sees this case as a "major step forward in protecting the rights of those who use computers to send private mail to each other or who use computers to create and disseminate publications."]

New communication technology has made it virtually impossible to control access to information. Information is sent at the speed of light across the world. As such, this communication can not be controlled by local government. This loss of control naturally frightens the Authorities in charge. Currently the laws regarding electronic communication are primitive and untested. Unless people as a whole get involved in changing the laws, there could be a huge witch hunt against anything "different" and "anti-establishment". The religious right, and other moral cripples, love to jump on bandwagons like this. Hopefully such organizations as the Electronic Frontier Foundation will help in this battle. We all have to fight the power... supply. The revolution will not be televised: It'll be stored on floptical.

If you would like to help Offworld, here are some contacts:
Any donations for Joel's legal defense and to rebuild Offworld can be sent to: Joel Joey Jay, Offworld U.S.A., c/o 36 Four Seasons Center, #300, Chesterfield, MO 63017-3103. Make check or money orders payable to either Offworld America or South Western Bell. Any computer equipment will also be very helpful. There is a one line UNO BBS running with updated information on the case, and about future Offworld type ventures at (314) 580-0164. Joel's internet address is: joeyj@aol.com. Joel's message line: (314) 941-8667.

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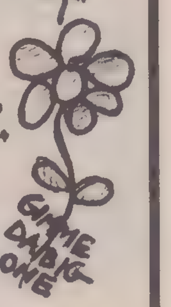

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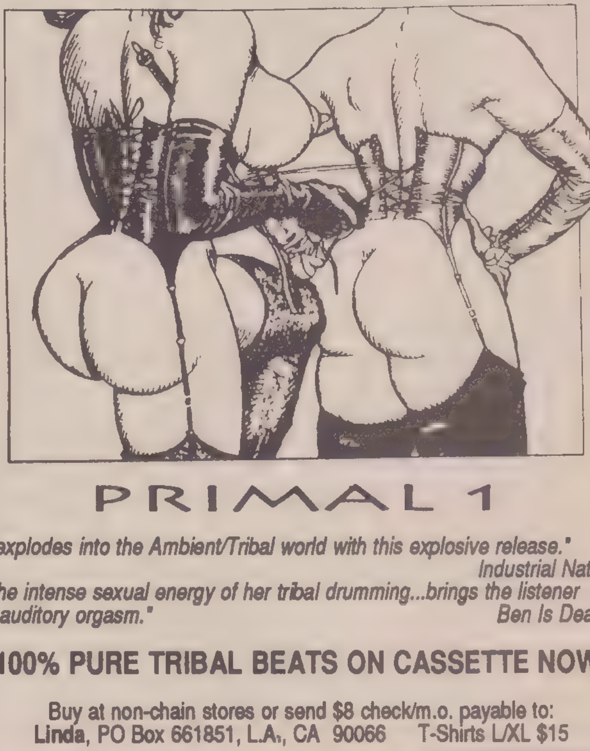

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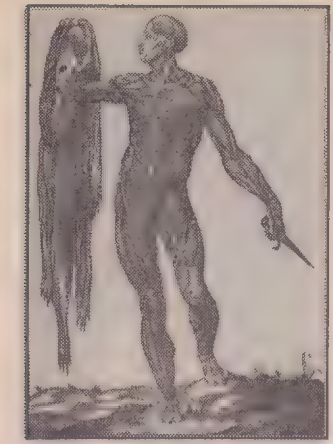

TOUCH:

Our skin and "nervous system" developed from the same **embryonic tissue**. They are a mysterious network bridging mind, brain, body, and Other. Our skin has fairly obvious **receptors** for warmth, cold, pressure, touch and pain (hot sensation is a mixture of signals from cold and pain sensors!), but there may be as many as thirteen sensor types. Each receptor is truly an individual sense organ. Each is a nerve-ending, or **dendrite**, of a **sensory neuron**, carrying its own signal into the spine or the brain. Some that go into the spine participate in **reflex arcs**, quick, looped pathways from skin to spine to muscle, bypassing the brain to get us out of danger without subjective delay (bypassing the brain usually got us into danger in the first place). There are no pleasure nerves, per se, although touch sensors can be pleasurably stimulated. Cats release **cuddling and stroking urges** (dogs release more play urges). **Frottage** is the practice of seeking out crowds so as to derive sexual pleasure from **rubbing** against them. Diners tip waiters higher if the waiter touches them. Touch by a teacher produces higher test scores. **Laying on of hands** has a healing effect, perhaps relating to our **light touch sensors**. The healing phenomena does not disappear, however, with the loss of those sensors as we age. Babies that are touched more grow faster, even with the same caloric intake, and develop stronger immune systems. Touch affects us even when we are unconscious. Putting a sleeping kid's hand in a bowl of warm water is case in point. The experience of **strong sensation** can have broadly different interpretations in consciousness. Our state of **arousal** affects pain. We do not perceive but **apperceive** some pains: that is, we bring a context to them that affects what we experience. If you pinch your **genitals** it hurts a little. If someone else pinches them, without warning, it hurts a lot. If you are in a state of sexual excitement, just about anything feels good. **Chronic** pain is somewhat of an unexplainable psycho-physiological state. **Bradykinin** is the body's chemical messenger of pain. **Bothrops jacaraca** is a South American snake with an incredibly painful bite, because it's venom causes a profound release of bradykinin. The **prostaglandins**, responsible for local inflammation and pain, are inactivated by **aspirin**, although the other effects of this neutralization are poorly studied. When certain special receptors are stimulated we experience a change in our **proprioception**. These sensors help us maintain our body image, that mysterious sense of exactly where and how we are in space. Lift an arm, blindfolded, and proprioception adjusts your mental body image. **Amputated limbs** remain as phantoms, complete with illusory sensations. the **Labyrinth** (or "**non-auditory inner ear**") alerts us to movement of the head. The rest of the body's **proprioceptors** are sensitive only to **stretch or pressure**. There is quite a marionette act going on here. Millions of tendon, muscle and joint nerve-endings report the tension in their area, and the brain resolves the data into a presumtive model of **somatic reality**. Stretch your hand wide and touch a table: your mind fills in the missing information between your fingers. We are perceiving a **gestaltic image** inside our mind that only needs partial confirmation for it to be "true." Thus it will be easy to develop virtual reality worlds. The real joke is the idea that we require a machine to do it.

—Paul Iannone

Beyond the Valley of the Home Shopping Dolls

By Cliff Thurber

Consider the following scenario: you are entertaining guests in your home when conversation veers to the subject of cult movies. Consequently Russ Meyer's name surfaces and someone proffers the suggestion of watching *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, which is unanimously favored by the group. With the T.V. remote control, you locate the video menu and select the movie from the electronic library provided by one of the local video dial tone services. During the course of the movie the question of food arises, and you deftly select one of the dozens of video food menus from local restaurants at your disposal for home delivery. These are only a couple of options that you would consider among the cornucopia of new consumer services via the telephone/cable television companies. This technology is the result of the Federal Communications Commission rescinding certain restrictions that formerly prohibited the telephone companies from entering the video dial tone business. Other services realized by such technology would include video game channels, educational seminars, simulated real estate tours and video banking. While such an all purpose network has the capacity to provide consumer convenience enjoyed by the Jetsons, there also appears to be room for nightmares of near-Orwellian proportions. The inevitable result will be two-way communication with a television set.

Bell Atlantic, one of the seven regional baby Bells fractioned during the 1984 (significant year?) break-up of AT&T, is spearheading the most revolutionary innovation of our currently infantile information age. The company has already built a prototype house in New Jersey which combines the telephone, computer, and television to bring such a full service network to the living room. The video dial service for movies already exists in three counties in New Jersey, with plans to wire the entire state with optical fiber– the essential conduit for such technology – before the end of the 1990's. Testing the marriage between video and television is the cable television industry. Although long well-equipped to provide the video medium, cable is scrambling to develop two-way switching technology vital to such interactive communication. Research by cable into this endeavor includes wireless pocket telephones that enable customers to communicate over the air. Cable companies have already started implementing the addition of optical fiber to their coaxial wiring to make possible such a foray into the video dial business.

Namely the issue is basic right-to-privacy. Many of the services said technology will make available (i.e. banking, shopping, entertainment, etc.), are the same routine consumer transactions carried out by people on a daily basis; however, these day-to-day consmer actions are performed at different places and at different times. This staggering of geography and time somewhat insulates the consumer against a privatizing element, which safeguards a person's habits from unwanted speculation. Conversely, if one's daily exigencies are mainly conducted through a video/phone link, all tell-tale consumerism habit information inevitably passes through two sets of never-blinking eyes: those of the phone and cable companies.

Anyone who possesses a major credit card is accustomed to the glut of junk mail that is delivered almost daily. When the card is used, the information of what has been purchased is sold by the banks to intermediaries. The credit information is compiled and processed into consumer profiles of cardholders, who are then sent the appropriate junk mail offering goods and services electronically matched to their personal credit profiles. The issue is of privacy: when these technologies are delivered to your television, your bank will not be the only establishment to know that you've purchased toys from Ye Olde Sex Shoppe.

Another disturbing aspect is one of mass dehumanization. As people become increasingly more dependent upon television for their daily demands, the more this dependence seems irrevocable. The linking of the television and telephone also creates new vulnerabilites for corruption such as fraud and pirating. And although the possibility of two eyes with 20/20 vision staring at me from behind some decoy video image is not something I believe in, it's unfortunately an image that refuses to disappear from my mind when the television is turned off. And no amount of Russ Meyer movies will help this.

Satellite has no conscience. —Edward R Murrow

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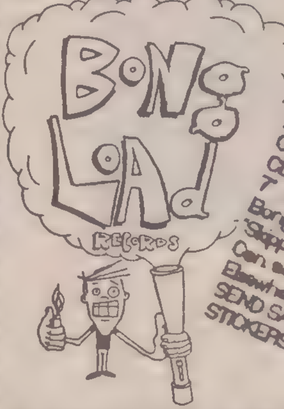

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Telephone Voice BBS Systems

By Ethan Port with help from George, Monica, Mark, Barb, and Vision

Since the '70's there have been several local telephone entertainment lines. Long before 976 or 900 numbers were invented, there were some privately run numbers folks could call to hear pre-recorded messages, and add their own two cents. Anyone pushing 30 who grew up in L.A. probably remembers "ZZZZZZZ". It was the last listing in the phone book, and in the early '70s we'd dial the number and hear a collection of stupid jokes and such. There was also "Freaky Phone", a really unusual line run by a '60s acid head. There were two lines, one for input, and one for output. The output was mixed by an acid-head named Uncle Freaky on a four-track cassette deck. The 90 minute tapes featured phone pranks, underground information, weird sounds, cynical phone sex, and erotic confessions from all over the San Fernando Valley, mixed down with weird electronic music, opera, and just plain noise. Members of Debt Of Nature, including some Medicine folks, made a few incredible phone prank tapes with John Trubey. These tapes have been circulating around, so look for them.

Unfortunately Freaky Phone is gone – we heard that Uncle Freaky has retired to a 'normal' job and life. It has been replaced by new lines popping up, again mainly in the Valley, but now run digitally on computer. These systems are very similar to computer bulletin board systems (BBSs), but you don't need a computer or modem to call them, just fingers. You push numbers on the telephone to choose menu options and other commands. Voice BBS systems are great if you are bored at home with no one to talk to, and don't have a computer. Some are more sophisticated than others, but most feature several lines feeding into a P.C. with a moderate amount of memory. Basically, *anyone* can start one of these lines! They usually have some sort of Public Message area where you can listen to and record messages. Many also have various questionnaires and Group and Private Chatting areas. Most systems, just like computer BBSs, have many phone numbers throughout Southern California, so after you call, listen to see if there is a local number closer to you, so you don't pay any toll charges. I think this social phenomenon is still in its infancy. We were not able to find any really exciting lines in the L.A. area, but because they seem to have so much potential as a communication medium, we were curious. We think that in the next few years there will be as many Voice BBSs as Computer BBSs. (There are currently over 60,000 in the U.S.). Once they get away from the 900/976 rip-off bandwagon, they could actually be a pretty interesting social phenomena. Unlike 900 numbers, these systems are all local, and can be much cheaper, so you are talking to people in your "neighborhood", and you may actually have something more interesting and realistic to tell each other besides what you may be wearing. Maybe a tour of these systems will inspire you, oh groovy BID reader, to start your own system! The potential for mischief and silliness in this medium seems pretty good. We've listed just a few that we tested out. We suggest if you call that you don't leave your real last name, be very careful who you give your phone number to, and always meet people in a public place. We heard about one girl who was recently date-raped by a "nice guy" she'd met on a phone system. So as with all life in the big city, be cautious! Here's a sampling of systems in the L.A. area. We expect to see a lot more of these popping up in the next few years. Check the *Recycler* for other numbers!

1) There is a line run by a guy whose name starts with an "R". We are not listing it or endorsing it since one of the BID people who called and spoke with him said they didn't want to be mentioned in the article because Ben Is Dead was a "gay magazine," and they didn't want to endorse or support anything associated with anything gay. We've found many of the "Valley" lines to be run by very narrow minded red necks. We can just bet they've got their little macho mustaches with long hair in the back, shaved on the sides (like the guys on *Cops*). COOL DUDE! So if you choose to call any 818 numbers all we can say is buyer beware!

2) **K-FONE** (818) 344-5000/710-0000/764-8000
This is a very personable system. Not too big, and pretty basic. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to figure it out. They call to "verify" everyone to keep bothersome people off of the line. They have one common public message area, and a few chat areas. It's currently an eight-line system run by Scott (a Dude from Calabasas) and Stephanie. There is a lot of "cross talk" from the other lines, so you can usually hear what everyone else is saying! They give everyone a few months of free time, and then it's about $5.00 a month for full access. There are usually listings in the public message area of other numbers to call. We found out about K-Phone because it shared a line at one time with Freaky Phone.

3) **TALK SALAD**: (310) 657-7800/(818) 558-6800/(310)842-7800
When you call in, use access code number 6666#
George called this system with his friend Monica, and a few other people. The owners are Karyn and Gregg, who also run *Modem Butterfly's Connection* Computer BBS (check the Recycler for local numbers). *Talk Salad* is their first straight system. We heard that Gregg wrote most of the software himself, and it does seem more sophisticated than most other computer voice systems. The "public message" areas are segregated into categories, the questionnaires are pretty extensive, there are over 24 lines feeding into the system, and a lot of other features. There are live "group chat" areas, and "C.B." areas where you can record a message, and add some canned sound effects from a digital sound library. You can append to a pre-existing message, forward it to other users, or choose other options that are found on a usual voice mail system. You can also send the message to either everyone on the system, or privately to an individual user. It's pretty confusing at first to figure out all the commands, and a few people we talked to said they actually preferred the smaller systems like K-Phone. We also heard some *rumors* about the "private" mail and "private message" areas and chats not being "private", and that some people might be eavesdropping and slurping over every word. The cold reality is that *Talk Salad* wants people to pay for all these features. While we found this system to be somewhat mainstream, our main criticism regarded equal, respectful treatment of all users. They give a few hours per day of free time to women, but restrict them to communicating only with women. Men have to spend $10 per hour (that's 17¢ a minute to you wiz kids. Of course if a woman pays she can communicate with anyone.) This tends to make the men really anxious, and the women really relaxed, about talking to others. The cost of putting a system like this together must be really large, but the high cost to men makes *Talk Salad* more like a 900 number than a homey local hangout like K-Phone. Still, because they only have access numbers local to Los Angeles, people do live pretty close together, and therefore have 'regional' topics to discuss. Monica organized a get together at the Cat and the Fiddle in Hollywood, and about twenty *Talk Salad* users attended, so people do actually meet each other and socialize in real life. There does seem to be a 'local/regular' crowd which probably makes *Talk Salad* more friendly and interesting that National 900 numbers. I suppose if you are talking to someone from pretty far away then 17¢ a minute isn't so bad. They also seem a bit delete happy. We had about seven different men and women log on, and almost all their accounts were deleted, sometimes several times. They weren't really given any warning, just suddenly had their accounts deleted. That can be a bit of a pain, since each time you fill out a new account you have to fill out this extensive questionnaire about yourself. We can understand that a publicly advertised system is bound to get a lot of desperate wackos, but when Vision called to ask why she'd been deleted she was told "We were sure you were a tape recording." Eventually I gather they'd like everyone to pay for time. That would probably be more fair (and probably more legal.) Gregg, the programer of the system, wrote one of the first computer BBS programs around 1981, and we gather sort of started the whole idea of using questionnaires on BBSs. *Talk Salad* is pretty advanced, and a nice idea, but compared to a computer, you spend so much time waiting for verbal instructions while twiddling your thumbs and toes, that at $10 an hour it seems way outside the price range of most BID readers. Although *Talk Salad* is a "straight" system, there seem to be a lot of gay and bisexual men and women on the line, too. This is good, because it tends to scare away gang members. [*What?* –ed] Gregg told us that the *Recycler*, where most of these systems advertise, won't even run an ad with the word "bi" in it! They'll allow gay and straight, and Gregg speculated that the owner's husband might be bi, so she prohibited advertising with the word "bi" to keep other women's husbands from having an outlet!

In summary, computers offer us a new technology to meet, socialize, and exchange information with many people at once in the privacy of our home and office. Most of the systems we surveyed still seem very primitive, at least socially. Even *Talk Salad* often has people just "hanging around" with nothing to say. I think most people could comfortably run a cool little voice system at the same prices they run computer BBSs: charging about $5 or $10 a month. They would be accessible to everyone, building communities of people who actually have something to say. Socially, these systems still need to evolve into more specialized forums. I don't think any of us want to hang out and be close friends with *everyone* in the world—we all have our own individual personalities and tastes. Of course these systems are molded by the people who call in; thus, if every BID reader called in, it would probably make a big difference. Most of these systems can be set up on a fairly inexpensive P.C. We could easily imagine a time when there are many of these systems, more specialized to particular tastes, all over the place, networked together, where people would leave audio information for each other. Bands could play demo tapes for other people. People can also run around with little tape recorders recording everything, uploading all these cool experiences and sounds and having them transferred and spread semi-digitally all around the world. Once we get fiber optic telephone lines, we can do this with really high fidelity. You could potentially do the same thing with video images too. You could get entire global sub-cultures forming, because unlike computer BBSs, anyone could do it. For those who like lurking behind anonymous personas, there is still the computer BBS. But especially for us "alternative/underground" folks, who actually go *out* to clubs and are used to interacting with real live people, having access to so many wacky audio messages is the perfect construction paper, glue, and glitter for a trans-continental dada fest! So everyone start taping and calling. But remember, some systems delete tape-recorded humans!

Some other systems heard of but not tested:
SUSAN BLOCK: (310)657.9090 Access Code 9090#
Gregg Colins also runs a variety of gay voice systems around the country. Some of the numbers are:
Voice Male North: (818)787.8888
Modem Boy: (310)854.6666 or (714)539.7000

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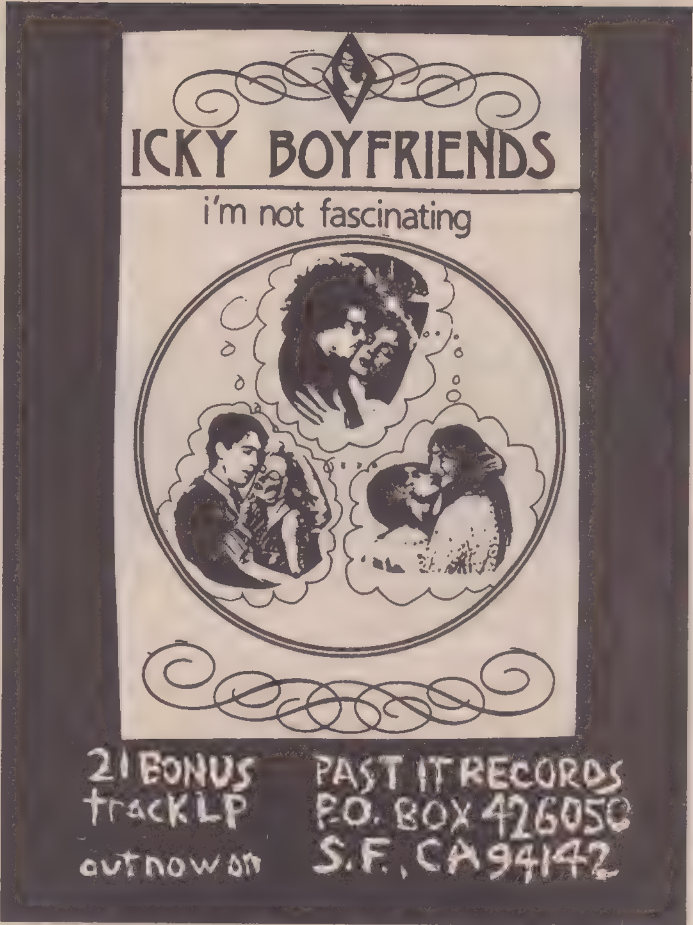
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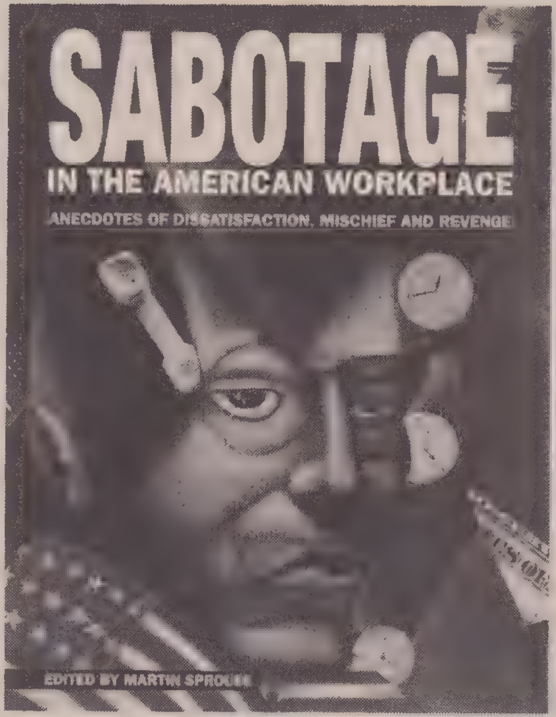
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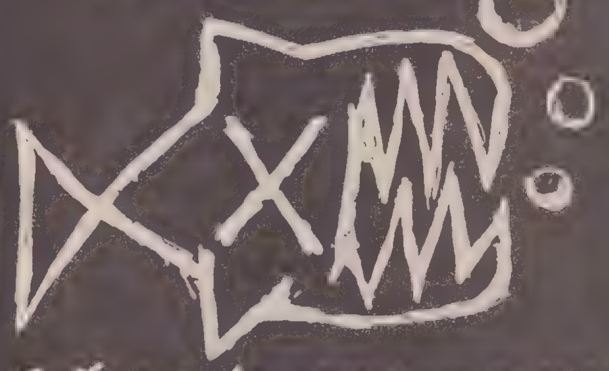

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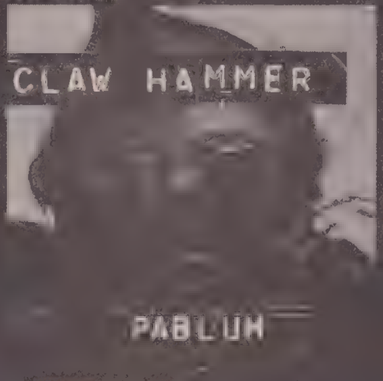

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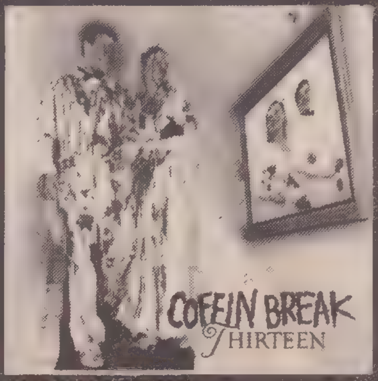

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Electropolis: Communication and Community on Internet Relay Chat

By Elizabeth M. Reid

COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Traditional forms of human interaction have their codes of etiquette. We are all brought up to behave according to the demands of social context. We know, as if instinctively, when it is appropriate to flirt, to be respectful, to be angry, or silent. The information on which we decide which aspects of our systems of social conduct are appropriate to our circumstances are more often physical than verbal. We do not need to be told that we are at a wedding, and should be quiet during the ceremony, in order to enact the code of etiquette that our culture reserves for such occasions. Interacting with other people, we rely on non-verbal information to delineate a context for our own contributions. Smiles, frowns, tones of voice, posture and dress tell us more about the social context within which we are placed than do the statements of the people we socialize with. The words themselves tell only half the story – it is their presentation that completes the picture. These aspects of human communication are taken for granted by us all – yet technology has the potential to challenge them. Computer-mediated communication subverts many of our assumptions about the practice of communication for it relies only upon words as a channel of meaning. This inherent limitation to the medium has several consequences. "Computer-mediated communication has at least two interesting characteristics:" writes Sara Kiesler, "(a) a paucity of social context information and (b) few widely shared norms governing its use."[1] Users of these systems are unable to rely on the conventions of gesture and nuances of tone to provide social feedback. Words, as we use them in speech, fail to express what we really mean once they are deprived of the subtleties of the non-verbal cues that we assume will accompany them. The sense of social context is lost. The standards of behavior that are normally decided upon by non-verbal cues are not clearly indicated when information is purely textual. Not only are smiles and frowns lost in the translation of synchronous speech to pure text, but factors of environment are unknown to interlocutors. It is not immediately apparent, in computer-mediated communication, what aspects of social etiquette are appropriate.

Given these limitations, how do computer-mediated interlocutors relate to one another? If the problems presented by the medium were insurmountable, then stable systems would not be able to form. Yet they have – computer-mediated communities do exist. One such example is that seen on Internet Relay Chat, the synchronous conference facility available on the Internet computer network.

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) allows many hundreds of people to communicate simultaneously. Users issue commands to the IRC program to create 'channels', virtual spaces within which to talk. IRC supports an unlimited number of channels, which are known by any name users care to create them under. Not all users have access to the same set of commands – there are degrees of privilege. The creator of a channel – the 'channel operator', or chanop' – has the power to control access to that channel, and can 'kick' unwanted people off it. IRC operators – 'opers' – maintain the IRC network connections and are able to control access to the entire system and may 'kill' unwanted users.

Kiesler, Siegel and McGuire have described computer-mediated communication as having four distinct features: an absence of regulating feedback, dramaturgical weakness, few social status cues, and social anonymity. IRC is subject to all these forces – yet a coherent system has managed to evolve over the years. Conventional systems for regulating interaction may fall apart when communication is computer-mediated, yet IRC has been in existence for several years, and is (barring technical mishaps) in continuous use. My interest is to describe how this social system works. How do users react to the ways in which computer-mediated communication deconstructs the conventional boundaries defining social interaction? What alternative methods are developed to sustain understanding? How does the electropolis of IRC function as a community?

ANONYMITY

Users of Internet Relay Chat are not generally known by their 'real' names. The convention of IRC is to choose a nickname under which to interact. The nicknames – or 'nicks' as they are referred to – chosen by IRC users range from conventional first names such as 'Peggy' and 'Matthew', to inventive and evocative pseudonyms such as "Wintrwolf', 'Pplater', 'LuxYacht', and 'WildWoman'.

These names can be changed at will – there is nothing that one IRC user can ascertain about another – beyond the fact that they have access to the Internet – that is not manipulable by that user.

Our efforts at self-presentation usually assume that we cannot change the basics of our appearance. Physical characteristics, although open to cosmetic or fashionable manipulation, are fundamentally unalterable. What we look like, we have to live with. This is, however, not the case on IRC. How an IRC user 'looks' to another user is entirely dependent upon the information they choose to give. It becomes possible to play with identity. The boundaries delineated by cultural constructs of beauty, ugliness, fashionableness or unfashionableness, can be bypassed on IRC. It is possible to appear to be, quite literally, whoever you wish.

The anonymity of interaction in IRC allows users to play games with their identities. The chance to escape the assumed boundaries of gender, race and age creates a game of interaction in which there are few rules but those that the users create themselves. IRC offers a chance to escape the languages of culture and body.

The changes that a user might make to his or her perceived identity can be small, a matter of realizing in others' minds a desire to be younger or more attractive. However, the anonymity of IRC can provide more than a means to 'fix' minor problems of appearance – one of the most fascinating aspects of this computer-mediated fluidity of cultural boundaries is the possibility of gender-switching. While superficial characteristics such as hair colour are relatively easily changed in 'real life', gender reassign-

Even if they grow up in the same neighborhood, block, or house, girls and boys grow up in different worlds of words. –Deborah Tannen, Ph.D ment is a far more involved process. IRC destroys the usually all but insurmountable confines of sex: changing gender is as simple as changing one's nickname to something that suggests the opposite of one's gender. It is possible for IRC to become the arena for experimentation with gender-specific social roles:

<Upchuck> Umm, I've gender switched once or twice for about 2 hours or so...
<Marion> how did you find being perceived as female?
<Upchuck> I did find it mildly irritating that I should get so much attention and be immediately fixated as a sex object simply by pretending to be female.[2]

The potential for such experimentation governs the expectations of many users of IRC. Gender is one of the more 'sacred' institutions of our society, a quality whose fixity is so assumed that enacted or surgical reassignment has and does involve complex rituals, taboos, procedures and stigmas – but this fixity becomes problematic on IRC. The attitudes taken by individual user of IRC differ as regards the possibility for gender concealment. Some view it is 'part of the game', others are hostile toward users who gender switch.

Whatever may be the attitude of individual users of the IRC program to such examples of gender experimentation, the crucial point is that it is a possibility interent to IRC. Exploitation of this potential is an accepted part of the 'virtual reality' – a popular catch-phrase amongst users of the Internet – of IRC. It becomes possible to play with aspects of behaviour and identity that are not normally open to alteration. IRC enables people to deconstruct aspects of their own identity, and to challenge and obscure the boundaries between some of our most deeply felt cultural significations. IRC users show a willingness to accept this phenomenon and to join in the games that can be played within it.

DISINHIBITION

Researchers of human behaviour on computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems tend to behave in a more uninhibited manner than they would in face-to-face encounters. Sproull and Kiesler state that computer-mediated behaviour 'is relatively uninhibited and nonconforming."[3] Rice and Love suggest that "disinhibition" may occur "because of the lack of social control that nonverbal cues provide."[4]

Internet Relay Chat reflects this observation. Protected by the anonymity of the computer medium, and with few social context cues to indicate the 'proper' ways to behave, users are able to express and experiment with aspects of their personality that social inhibition would generally force them to suppress.

Users of IRC often form strong friendships. Without social context cues to inhibit people – to encourage shyness – computer-mediated interlocutors will often 'open up' to each other to a great degree. Hiltz and Turoff have noted that some users of CMC systems "come to feel that their very best and closest friends are members of their electronic group, whom they seldom or never see."[5] 'Net.romances', long distance romantic relationships over IRC, can result form the increased tendency for participants in CMC systems to be uninhibited[6]:

<Lori> The more we talked, the more we discovered we had in common...
<Lori> I told him that I was starting to get a crush on him...
<Lori> Anyway, it's grown and grown over the months.
<Daniel> A few mishaps, but we've overcome them, to bounce back stronger than ever.
<Lori>And we'll be getting together for 3 weeks at the end of November, to see if we're as wonderful as we think we are.[7]

Such expressions of feeling are not in any way thought to be shallow or ephemeral. Far from being unsatisfactory for "more interpersonally involving communication tasks, such as getting to know someone," as Hiemstra describes researchers of CMC as having characterized the medium, IRC has in this instance fostered an extremely emotional bond between two people.[8] Users of IRC are able to dispense with the conventional boundaries surrounding communication, and cross-cultural exchange, to form deep friendships, even love affairs, with people whom they have never met.

Net.romances display computer-mediated relationships at their most idyllic. However, disinhibition and increased freedom from social norms have another side. Along with increased broad-mindedness and intimacy among some users goes increased hostility on the part of the others. 'Flaming', the expression of anger, insults and hatred, is a common phenomenon. Anonymity makes the possibility of punishment for transgression of cultural mores appear to be limited. Protected by terminals and separated by distance, the sanction of physical violence is irrelevant, although, as I shall discuss later, social sanctions are present and often in a verbal form that apes physical violence. The safety of anonymous expression of hostilities and obscenities that would otherwise incur social sanctions encourages some people to use IRC as a forum for airing their resentment of individuals or groups in a blatantly uninhibited manner:

!Venice! Bashers have taken over +gblf... we could use some help...
!radv*! Comment: -Gay_Bashe:+gblf- FUCK ALL OF BUTT FUCKING< ASS LICKING< CHICKEN SHIT BIOLOGICAL DISIASTERS![9]

Not all uninhibited behaviour on IRC is either so negative or so positive. Much of the opportunity for uninhibited behaviour is invested by users of IRC in sexual experimentation. The usually culturally enforced boundaries between sexual and platonic relationships are obscured in computer-mediated circumstances. Norms of etiquette are challenged by the lack of social context cues, and the safety given by anonymity and distance allow users to ignore otherwise strict codes regarding sexual behaviour. Conversations on IRC can be sexually explicit, in blatant disregard of social norms regarding the propositioning of strangers:

Han does this compu-sex really happen?
Lola-> *Han* *smooch*
Han... are you horny today at all ;)?
Lola-> *Han* today? it's the middle of the night where I am... as for the adjective, well, do what you can ;-)
Han mmmmmm......when did you last get off?

Such behaviour is often referred to as 'net.sleazing'. Sexual experimentation is a popular Internet game, perhaps because the Internet primarily serves educational institutions and thus students who are generally in their late teens or early twenties. Adolescents, coming to terms with their sexuality in the 'real world', find that the freedom of 'virtual reality' allows them to safely engage in sexual experimentation. Ranging from the aforementioned gender-role switching to flirtation and 'compu-sex', IRC provides a medium for the safe expression of a "steady barrage of typed testosterone."[10]

Disinhibition and the lack of sanctions encouraging self-regulation lead to extremes of behaviour on IRC. Users express hate, love, intimacy and anger, employing the freedom of the electronic medium to air views and engage in relationships that would in other circumstances be deemed unacceptable. This 'freedom' does not imply that IRC is an idyllic environment. Play with social conventions can indeed lead to greater positive affect between people, as it has between 'Daniel" and 'Lori', and to greater personal fulfillment for some users. It can, however, also create a violent chaos in which people feel 'free' to act upon prejudices, even hatreds, that might otherwise be socially controlled.

SHARED SIGNIFICATIONS

"Culture can be understood as a set of solutions devised by a group of people to meet specific problems posed by situations they face in common."[11] In this sense the users of IRC constitute a culture, a community, The measures which users of the system have devised to meet their common problems, posed by the medium's lack of regulating feedback and social context cues, its dramaturgical weakness, and the factor of

The presence of humans, in a system containing high-speed electronic computers and high-speed, accurate communications, is quite inhibiting. –Stuart Luman Seaton anonymity, are the markers of their community, their common culture.

Textual substitution of traditionally nonverbal information is a highly stylized, even artistic, procedure that is central to the construction of an IRC community. Common practice is to simply verbalize physical cues, for instance literally typing 'hehehe' when traditional methods of communication would call for laughter. It is a recognized convention to describe physical actions or reactions, usually denoted as such by presentation between two asterisks:

> <Wizard> Come, brave Knight! Let me cast a spell of protection on you... . . Oooops- wrong spell! You don;t mind being green for a while- do you???
> <Prince> Lioness: please don't eat him...
> <storm> *shivers from the looks of lioness*
> <Knight> Wizard: Not at all.
> <Bel_letre> *Hahahah*
> <Lioness> Very well, your excellency. *looks frustrated*
> <Prince> *falls down laughing*.
> <storm> *walks over to lioness and pats her paw*
> <Wizard> *Diseplls the spells cast on Knight!*
> <Lioness> *licks Storm*
> <storm> *Looking up* Thank You for not eating me!

IRC users also have a 'shorthand' for the description of physical condition. They (in common with users of other computer-mediated communication systems such as news and e-mail) have developed a system of presenting textual characters as representations of physical action. Commonly known as 'smileys', CMC users employ alphanumeric characters and punctuation symbols to create strings of highly emotively charged keyboard art:

> :-) or :) a smiling face, as viewed side-on
> :-(or : (an 'unsmiley': an unhappy face
> :-(*) someone about to throw up
> >:-O someone screaming in fright, their hair standing on end

These 'emoticons', as they are known on the Internet, are many and various. Although the most commonly used is the plain smiling face – used to denote pleasure or amusement, or to soften a sarcastic comment – it is common for IRC users to develop their own emoticons, adapting the symbols available on the standard keyboard to create minute and essentially ephemeral pieces of textual art to represent their own virtual actions and responses. Such inventiveness and lateral thinking demands skill. Successful communication within IRC depends on such conventions as verbalized action and the use of emoticons. Personal success on IRC depends on the user's ability to manipulate these tools. The users who can succinctly and graphically portray themselves to the rest of the IRC usership will be the ones most able to create a community within that virtual system.

Whether users of IRC are involved in an on-line fantasy role-playing game, or just feeling happy, the concentration of verbalized physical actions and reactions in their exchanges demonstrates the extent to which users of the IRC system feel it important to create a physical context for their peers to interpret their behaviour within. Verbal statements by themselves give little indication of the emotional state of the speaker, and without physical expression to decode the specific context of statements, it is easy to misinterpret their intent:

> *Whopper* just kidding...not trying to be offensive
> <Fireship> *Whopper* didn't assume that you were...

In order for IRC users to constitute a community it is necessary for them to contrive a method to circumvent the possibility of loss of intended meaning of statements. Verbalization of physical condition is that method. Without some way of compensating for the inherent lack of social context cues in computer-mediated communication, IRC would get no further than the deconstruction of conventional social behaviors. The textual cues utilized on IRC provide the symbols of interpretation – of culture – that are necessary to meet the specific problems posed by CMC. These shared modes of understanding hold IRC users together as members of a community.

The success of any community is dependent upon the degree of voluntary or enforced cooperation between its members. IRC is no exception to this rule. Special problems arise on IRC, not the least of which is the tendency for users to freely express potentially disruptive emotions. Special solutions have been devised to meet these problems – community on IRC is both upheld by convention and enforced by structure.

SOCIAL SANCTIONS

Nicknames are a sensitive issue on IRC. The program demands that each user offer a unique name to the system, to be used in their interaction with other users. It is common for users to prefer and consistently use one nickname, and one of the greatest taboos on IRC is the use of another's chosen nickname. The illegitimate use of nicknames can cause anger on the part of their rightful users and sometimes deep feelings of guilt on the part of the perpetrators. This public announcement was made by a male IRC user to the 'Usenet' newsgroup alt.irc, a forum for asynchronous discussion of IRC:

> I admit to having used the nickname "allison" on several occasions, the name of an acquaintance and "virtual" friend at another university. Under this nick, I talked on channels +hottub and +gblf, as well as with a few individuals privately. This was a deceptive, immature thing to do, and I am both embarrassed and ashamed of myslef. I wish to apologize to everyone I misled, particular users 'badping' and 'kired'...[12]

The physical aspect of IRC may be only virtual, but the emotional aspect is actual. IRC is not a 'game' in any lighthearted sense – it is also clear that users' acceptance of IRC's potential for the deconstruction of social boundaries is limited by their reliance on the construction of communities. Experimentation ceases to be acceptable when it threatens the delicate balance of trust that holds IRC together. The uniqueness of names, their consistent use, and respect for – and expectation of – their integrity, is crucial to the development of on-line communities.

The sanctions available to the IRC community for use against errant members are both social and structural. The degree to which members feel, as 'Allison' did, a sense of shame for actions which abuse the systems of meaning devised by the IRC community, is related to the degree to which they participate in the deconstruction of traditional social conventions. By being uninhibited, by experimenting with cultural norms of gender and trust, 'Allison' became a part of a social network that encourages self-exposure by simulating anonymity and therefore invulnerability. In this case, the systems of meaning created by the users of IRC have become conventions with a terrorizing authority over those who participate in their use. As I shall describe, users of IRC who flout the conventions of the medium are ostracized, banished from the community. The way to redemption for such erring members is through a process of guilt and redemption; through, in 'Allison's' case, a 'public' ritual of self-accusation, confession, repentance, and atonement.

IRC supports mechanisms for the enforcement of acceptable behaviour. Channel operators – 'chanops' or 'chops' – have access to the 'kick' command, which throws a specified user out of the given channel. IRC operators – 'opers' – have the ability to 'kill' users, to break the network link that connects them to IRC. The code of etiquette for 'killing' is outlined in the documentation that is part of the IRC program:

> Obnoxious users had best beware the operator who's fast on the /kill command. "/kill nickname" blows any given nickname completely out of the chat system. Obnoxiousness is not to be tolerated. But operators do not use /kill lightly.[13]

A girl should really have some excuse for calling up a boy unless she wants to seem to be chasing him. —Amy Vanderbilt

There is a curious paradox in the concomitant usage of the words 'obnoxious' and 'kill'. Obnoxiousness seems a trivial term to warrant the use of such textually violent commands such as /kick and /kill. The word trivializes the degree to which abusive behaviour, deceit, and shame can play a part in interaction on Internet Relay Chat. The existence of such negative behaviour and emotions is played down, denigrated – what is stressed are the measures that can be taken by the 'authorities' – the chanops and opers – on IRC. Violators of the integrity of the IRC system are marginalized, outcast, described so as to seem insignificant, but their potential for disrupting the IRC community is suggested by the emotive strength of the words with which they are punished. The terms 'killing' and 'kicking' substitute for their physical counterparts – IRC users may feel safe from physical threat, but the sanctions of violence are there, albeit in textualized form.

Operators have adopted their own code of etiquette regarding /kills. It is the general rule that an operator issuing such a command should let other operators, and the victim, know the reason for his or her action by adding a comment to the '/kill message' that fellow operators will receive:

```
*** Notice – Received KILL message for mic from mgp (massive abusive channel dumping involving lots of ctrl-gs and gaybashing, amongst other almost as obnoxious stuff)
*** Notice – Received KILL message for JP from Cyberman ((repeatedely ignorning warnings to stop nickname abuse))
```

Operators have considerable power within IRC. They can control not only an individual's access to IRC but are also responsible for maintaining the network connections that enable IRC programs at widely geographically separated sites to 'see' each other. The issue of whether or not operators have too much power is a contentious one. While operators are careful to present their/killings as justifiable in the eyes of their peers, this is often not felt to be the case by their victims. Accusations of prejudice and injustice abound, and the hierarchical status quo is often summarily re-enforced:

```
!JP! fucking stupid op cybman /killd methink ya some kind of net.god? WHy not _ask_ people in the channle i'm in if I'm annoying them before blazing away????
*** Notice – Received KILL message for JP from Cyberman (abusive wallops)
```

'Kills' can also be seen as unjustified by other operators, and the operator whose actions are questioned by his peers is likely to be 'killed' himself:

```
*** Notice – Received KILL message for Alfred from Kamikaze (public insults are not appreciated)
*** Notice – Received KILL message for Kamikaze from dave (yes, but they are allowed.)
```

The potential for tension between operators of IRC is often diffused into a game. 'Killwars', episodes in which opers will kill each other, often happen. There is rarely overt hostility in these 'wars' – the attitude taken is one of ironic realization of the responsibilities:

```
!puppy*! ok! one frivolous kill coming up! :D
!Maryd*! Go puppy! :*)
***Notice – Received KILL message for puppy from Glee (and here it IS! : )
!Chas*! HAHA : )
*** Notice - Received KILL message for Glee for Maryd (and here's another)
*** Notice - Received KILL message fro Maryd from Chas (and another)
...[fifteen more 'kills' deleted]...
!Alfred! thank you for a marvellously refreshing kill war; this completes my intro into the rarified and solemn and solemn IRCop godhood.
```

The ideals of authority and freedom are often in opposition on IRC as the newly invented social conventions of the IRC community attempt to deal with emotions and actions in ways that emulate the often violent social sanctions of the 'real world'. The potential for tension and hostility between users and opers, arising over the latter's use of power, can erupt into anger and abuse. Disagreements between operators can result in the use of their powers against each other. The games that opers play with 'killing' express their realization of the existence of these elements of tension in the hierarchical nature of IRC culture and serve to diffuse that tension – at least among opers.

THE IRC COMMUNITY

Community on IRC is "created through symbolic strategies and collective beliefs."[14] IRC users share a common language, a shared web of verbal and textual significations that are substitutes for, and yet distinct from, the shared networks of meaning of the wider community. Users of IRC share a vocabulary and a system of understanding that is unique and therefore defines them as constituting a distinct culture. This community is self-regulating, having systems of hierarchy and power that allow for the punishment of transgressors of those systems of behaviour and meaning. Members of the community feel a sense of responsibility for IRC – most respect the conventions of their subculture, and those who don't are either marginalized or reclaimed through processes of guilt and atonement. The symbolic identity – the virtual reality – of the world of computer-mediated communication is a rich and diverse culture comprised of highly specialized skills, language, and unifying symbolic meanings.

Users of IRC treat the medium as virtually free space, in which they can act out fantasies, challenge social norms, and exercise aspects of their personality that would be inhibited under normal interactive circumstances. The medium itself blocks some of the socially inhibiting institutions that users would, under other circumstances, be operating within. Cultural indicators - of social position, of age and authority, of personal appearance – are relatively weak in a computer-mediated context. They might be inferred, but they are not evident. Internet Relay Chat leaves it open to users to create virtual replacements for these social cues – IRC interaction involves the creation of replacements and substitutes for physical cues, and the construction of social hierarchies and positions of authority. That it is possible for users of IRC to do this is due to the ways in which the medium deconstructs conventional boundaries constraining interaction and conventional institutions of interpersonal relationships. It is this freedom from convention that allows IRC users to create their own conventions and to be come a cohesive community.

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NOTES

1) KIESLER, SARA, JANE SIEGEL, and TIMOTHY W. McGUIRE, "Social Psychological Aspects of Computer-Mediated Communication", *American Psychologist,* Volume 39, Number 10, October, 1984 (pp. 1123-1134), p. 1126.

2) All quotes from IRC sessions are taken from logs kept during 1991. These logs were either kept by myself, or given to me by the log-keeper. In all cases names have been changed to preserve anonymity

3) KIESLER, SARA and LEE SPROULL, "Reducing Social Context Cues: Electronic Mail in Organizational Communication" in *Management Science,* Volume 32, Number 11, November 1986 (pp. 1492-1512), p. 1498.

4) RICE, RONALD E. and GAIL LOVE, "Electronic Emotion: Socioemotional Content in a Computer-Mediated Communication Network" in *Communication Research,* Volume 14, No. 1, February 1987 (pp. 85-108), p. 89.

5) HILTZ, STARR ROXANNE and MURRAY TUROFF, *The Network Nation: Human Communication via Computer,* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.: Reading, MA, 1978, p.101.

6) Users of the Internet often refer to social phenomena occurring by using the format "net.<phenomenon> – thus 'net.sleazing' and 'net.romance'.

7) At their request, the original names of the subjects have been quoted.

8) HIEMSTRA, GLEN, "Teleconferencing, Concern for Face, and Organization Culture", in M. Burgoon (ed.), *Communication Yearbook 6,* Sage: Beverly Hills, 1982 (pp.874-904), p. 880.

9) Note that these are 'wallop' messages, written to all operators. Wallops are denoted by the exclamation marks that bracket the speaker's name.

10) BARLOW, JOHN PERRY, "Crime and Puzzlement: Desperados of the DataSphere" electronic manuscript (also published in *Whole Earth Review,* Sausalito, California, Fall 1990, pp. 45-57, lines 114-115.

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12) Newsgroup alt.irc 28.9.91. Name and internet address omitted by request.

13) Internet Relay Chat, documentation file 'MANUAL.' Copyright (c) 1990, Karl Kleinpaste (karl@cis.ohio-state.edu).

14) MEYER, GORDON and JIM THOMAS, "The Baudy World of the Byte Bandit: A Postmodernist Interpretation of the Computer Underground" electornic manuscript (also published in SCHMALLEGER, F. (ed.) *Computers in Criminal Justice,* Wyndham Hall: Bristol, Indiana, 1990, pp. 31-67), lines 1145-1146.

The Backpack Loudspeaker: LOUDER THAN GOD

BY DON LEWIS

Those fantastic SEEMEN-men, Kal Spelletich and Mykel Diaz, are always coming up with new ways to "reach out and touch someone", so I thought I'd head to San Francisco and see what they were up to. Seems they've devised a portable back-pack communicator, sort of an industrial-strength bullhorn, that they use to drown out anything from street corner evangelists to plug-pulling club owners. Nice folks that they are, Kal and friends gave me a short demonstration of the backpack's fuck-up capabilities at the 24th and Mission BART station. I was disappointed only in that the demo was too short; I much preferred to hear noise rather than the endless propaganda spouted by the preachers.

Further media subversions in the works include a pirate radio station. (Look out, KCRW! Seemen can do more of Southern California, too.) Listen for them when they tour this summer.

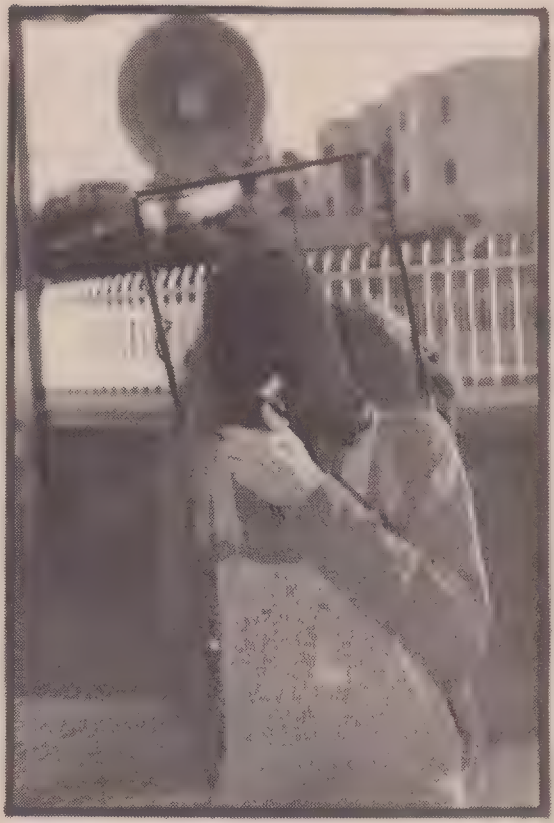


PHOTO: DON LEWIS

MYKEL DIAZ OF SEEMEN USING BACKPACK LOUDSPEAKER

SEEMEN: We built this backpack that has a deep cell car battery in it, that way it lasts for two hours of power. The batteries are for marine use. So we've got an amplifier and a little outdoor public address system speaker mounted on the back of a backpack. You toss the battery into the back of that with the amplifier, and have a little CB radio springy-cord microphone hanging out of the side. It has an on-off switch which is always off unless you squeeze it. Turn that baby up to about nine and you don't even have to scream through it, it's incredibly loud. It tends to feedback pretty intensely too, so it gives a good screeching wail [grins].

BID: So what do you say through it?

One of the main reasons for building it was to have something portable with no lines, that was long-lasting, and really loud, louder than a bullhorn. Now it's functional on streets or out in front of clubs. I'm just like a barker, going through the crowd offstage. We tend to blow a lot of fuses on tour. We always have drums, d you can always have fire, but you can't always have loud live audio – you lose all that juice. I always hated being that dependent on–

On the club's management–

We can even be shut down in a club and still have fire, drums, and now amplified vocals. We're dying to put it into use. Audience members can use it also: one of us can be wearing the backpack and just hand [the mike] to them.

It gives them some power.

Absolutely.

How much does the thing weigh?

Let's see…30 pounds?

Is the AIDS piece you were talking about part of what you communicate through this apparatus?

That was a big inspiration. We've done this AIDS piece pretty much since we started the group [six years ago]. It's changed a lot over the years.

According to what's currently on your mind?

Yeah I guess so, according to the amount of *rage* we have about the whole thing.

Are you trying to raise the consciousness of people? It seems you're trying to provoke them too.

Sometimes I think that doing things in brutish ways has a more powerful impact.

Do you think it would make them change?

Well, if ways need to be changed, yeah. You can't assume that everyone needs to change. It's just dialog that's really important, just talking about things. Catharsis is even good; it releases people. I get that all the time from people that it's a positive release for them. That's a goal for all the pieces we do, not just the AIDS piece. Nothing's really shocking. I mean, emotion and passion is shocking.

One thing we're looking forward to is taking the little pirate radio station on tour. We are tweaking and playing with media and having fun with it, and *using* it, not just thinking "Radio stations and TV stations, they're for other people". It's a medium, same as paint and a brush, a video camera, or standing on a soapbox and screaming.

We'll broadcast as we circle the country this summer from the van, broadcast every show live on the FM frequency.

Which FM frequency?

Way to the left. There's more space; you're not competing with the big strong stations on the right.

How is the setup constructed?

It's incredibly simple. You can almost get everything at Radio Shack. It can be incredibly portable, light. Of course, the stronger the broadcast signal gets, the size and weight increases. A really exciting goal is being able to graduate into portable pirate TV stations. As long as you're mobile they can't catch you.

What would you broadcast?

While on tour we can play DJ and play records, tapes. We can hang the microphone out of the car so they can hear the tires on the pavement…

We meet a lot of people on tour because we're always staying at people's houses, and we can give them a chance to speak up too.

What would they have to say?

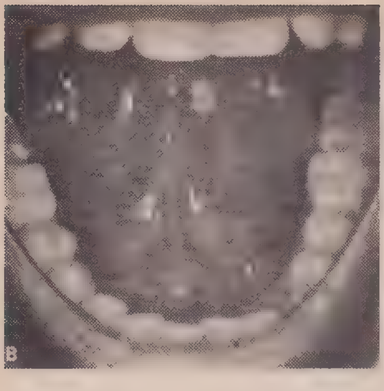
People have stories, background… we can interview people, talk about real-life things… It's really up to people and the mood, I guess.

I've been handed the mike before and I'll usually say something stupid.

You'll freeze up. That's okay.

One time we were staying at this dude's house in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and they had these 50-60 foot trees with – [there] must have been 1,000 frogs in there making a deafening roar. I went "Wow! What the hell was that?" and he said "What?" "Are those frogs?" and he said

To communicate through silence is a link between the thoughts of man. –Marcel Marceau



TASTE:

Dry salt on your tongue is tasteless – until it gets wet. One of the purposes of saliva is to dissolve things so that we can taste them. All of our taste sensations are considered combinations of four basic flavors. **Sweet** is our least sensitive flavor. **Bitter** is the most sensitive. **Sour** and **salty** are in between. Many **bitter** things are poisonous, many **sweet** things are good for you. A few of our favorite foods are bitter, but not (dramatically) poisonous: **coffee, cocoa, toast, walnuts, arugula, broccoli** and other greens. Even some fruits (**apples, lemons** and **peaches**) have some bitter flavor. We may crave them because bitter flavor is scarce in our diet. The Chinese thought we needed some of all the flavors, each one nourishing a specific organ system of the body. Bitter is the burnt flavor of fire, the supposed energy of the heart. So while no one, perhaps, eats arugula as a consoling snack, bitter drinks and bitter, cold, fatty confections, buffered with substantial sweet flavor, are ubiquitous. The ancient Chinese included a fifth flavor: **aromatic or pungent** (chilies, curries, onions, garlic, spices, or mints), associating it with the lungs. In a hot, smoggy environment, it probably makes sense to use more mint, a cooling aromatic, than the many heating spices and salsas. But these hot aromatics are on the rise nationally. Since the lungs are thought to be associated with our emotions, we use pungent, lung-dispersing flavors to disperse our emotional pressures, much as some use **cigarettes**. But excess of any flavor weakens the related organ system. Salty is thought to condense our energies, forming the bones. Excess of salty flavor (including sex, as in the blues code for sex, "salty dog") weakens the kidneys; excess of bitter (or experience) weakens the heart; too much **sour** (like liquor) weakens the liver; too much **sweet** flavor weakens the digestive system. Chinese doctors make an art of studying the flavor cravings of patients (while Tibetan doctors consider the appearance, smell and taste of their patients' urine the sine qua non of diagnostic procedures). **Pica**, the craving and eating of indigestible and unusual substances, such as paint chips or pencils, is a common metabolic imbalance, especially dangerous for tenement children. **Geophagy**, the consumption of dirt, is very common in the South, even among the well-fed, although it is hard not to consider this some kind of instinctual trace-mineral supplementation. The flavor of specific dirt areas is deeply craved by habituated peoples, whole families cherishing and keeping secret their favorite hillside or ditch. Food is a relative concept, anyhow. Among those who have tried it, **human flesh**, especially of enemies, is described as incomparably delicious. This may be bravado, the actual evidence of cannibalism being a little sketchy. The Chinese, among the world's most **omniphagous** of peoples, think nothing of consuming a number of slimy foods that are thoroughly repugnant to Westerners. In Tang Dynasty China, c. 700 CE, newborn rats were fed on honey for a week, and then put on the dinner table to fend for themselves in a flurry of chopsticks. At least they aren't hairy at that age. **Live consumption** of shrimp is well-known. **Monkey-brain eating** is common in Asia, and perhaps in Africa. **Bug eating** is prevalent throughout the world, the "**bugabug**" of West Africa, a large flying termite, being flung live into the fire and then consumed like potato chips. In many country **grubs** are a delicacy. During the Somali famine people have been trying to survive on bark and leaves. Really poor people don't have pets.

—Paul Iannone

"I guess so. Barely notice 'em", and went inside. That would have been incredible just to broadcast. You can always make an audio tape of it, big deal, but to broadcast it gives it a different kind of life, a different megaphone, a different expression. It gives the frogs a voice when you bring them into people's houses, broadcasting something like that live. This isn't something that has to be documented or recorded – that's all fine and dandy – but yeah, I guess it's to empower people.

Empower the frogs.

Let the frogs be heard god damnit. There's pigeons and all kinds of things that need to speak up. Crows...

Life things that get pushed aside by what we're fed every day in the media.

Yeah, and pushed aside in our environment. There's a heirarchy of survival, and certain things tend to get pushed to the bottom, be it pigeons or certain classes of people. There are different ways of getting trampled.

Why do you go out of your way to try to give voices to these people?

It seems like someone should do it.

It makes the world a better place.

It sure does! The goal is survival for everyone, not just the rich white Republicans who have special bunkers up in South Dakota a mile underground with filtered air and water and a lifetime supply of everything. Everyone should get that chance.

[Kal, Mykel, and Nick give a 5-minute performance of the backpack loudspeaker at the BART station, overpowering the evangelist preachers that frequent there. Bystanders are momentarily confused, then go about their business.]

POST-PEFORMANCE REACTION

Nick Spelletich: I don't need someone else's opinion of the gospel. Here's this information: you give me yours, I'll give you mine.

Kal: Let's go back in an hour.

Mark: [to Kal] What did that guy say to you?

Kal: "We preach the gospel and you just make noise!"

Mykel: Man I live right behind this stop and you [preechers] make noise *all the time*!

Kal: We need to bunch up and move in a group. Moving in a group, people freak more, man.

Do you have any thoughts now that you've done this action?

Kal: It was kind of exciting. My heart was racing, my eyes pealed...

Nick: The gospel man was nice. I wish he had taken our information.

Kal: He was really biased towards his [religion]. He *had* to be right. What bummed him out was that we were louder than him. We rendered his signal useless.

Mykel: You want to talk about God? My PA's louder.

Kal: Yeah, gospel schmospel, man, he's a follower. I don't need to follow someone's written diatribe.

What information did you pass out?

Kal: A lot of this is from the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighter's [Contras] manual published by the CIA.

Nick: How to fuck shit up in society and everyday life.

Kal: These specifically had to do with jobs and how to chill out at your job...

Are you frustrated by the lack of communication of this kind of stuff?

Kal: Kind of. As I was doing it I was thinking "The only time we perform is in clubs, and there's all these advertisements and uptight club assholes. People go to the show *expecting* something. You don't have to live up to anyone's expectations out there. Just do whatever you want.

Nick: Instead of someone pulling the plug on you at a club because you did something wrong. Like Raji's.

Mykel: Dick came out, lights got shut off.

Do you think you'll do it again?

Kal: I think we should go out there every Friday.

[background sounds of gospel singing]

Now he's out there singing again.

Kal: I think we should go out there in half an hour.

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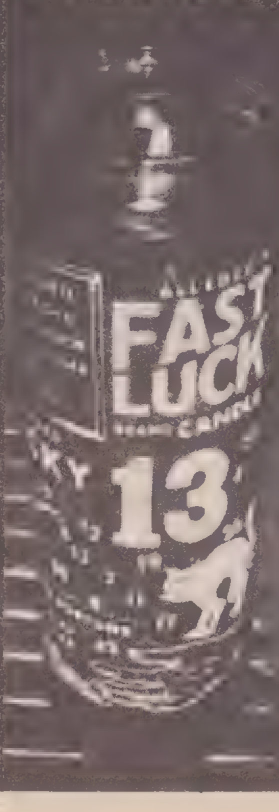

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The Xit On Xex Xlang

BY PAUL IANNONE

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The essential prerequisite of good communication is clear and unambiguous language. No such luck with English. Its archeological layers of slang are cluttered with derivation like the half-buried trash of an ancient race. And nowhere in the linguistic dig of English is there more twisted slang than in the domain of sex. Sex should be a spectacular opportunity for communication. But whatever we say our love is, language lies between us.

To examine sexual slang is to find two basic facts in evidence. Sexual slang is a collection of old words and old ideas, many in daily use without regard to their nasty past, like some kind of forgotten swastikas. And "our" sexual language can be seen to be almost exclusively derived from the male perspective. The historical sex-contract may be disappearing, but it seems that the words of that contract will remain. [All **bold** words are real english].

MEN ON RELATIONSHIPS

Moist, **meat**, **meal**, **mother**, **mate**, **material**: all derive from the same female-gender words (relating to food). Historically, men spoke of women in terms that referred to their value as cooks and as food. A dinner date is still a symbolic meal-in-a-meal. Once you have the meal, put the **pestle** in the **mortar**, and **grind** away. The word for what women supposedly seek in a relationship, **substance**, literally means *to lie under*.

MEN ON MARRIAGE

Husbandry is an old word for farming, the idea being **plowing** a feminine **furrow** and putting in **seed**. A **House**, the birdcage of a captured woman, is from the word for *husk*, an external structure to protect the precious seed inside. A man both **invests**, and protects his **investment**, with his **weapon**, which in Old English openly referred to the **penis**. The "were" part of **werewolf** means husband.

MEN ON CONCEPTION

An **incubus**, or male demon, **incubates** (lit. *puts in*) his sperm in a helpless woman having a sexual nightmare. She then gets to **flesh-out** his idea, like it or not. He is responsible for the **concept**, she just bakes the loaf. **Contra-ception** is refusing a man's thought (or god's thought if you're Catholic). Men are **fornicators** (*fornix* is a vagina or stove), and really any oven will do.

MEN ON SPERM

What makes the loaf rise? The same thing that pushed his penis up – yeast. But you have to protect your starter. Sperm in slang is **spendings**; the vagina, the **spender**; a finished man is **spent**. Not losing sperm is the central strategy of **tantric yoga** (Sanskrit, *to yoke*, or join parts), an art developed by middle-aged Indian men. An example was Swami Muktananda, who went so far as to say that you *could* ejaculate as much as *once a year – if you had to* – but *you'd never know God* if you did.

MEN ON MASTURBATION

Jerks jerk. **Jerk bumps**, a boy's pimples, are a give away of excessive "practice" with a newly hot **jerking iron**. "**Man**," itself, is Latin for *hand*. So a "man's job" is a hand job. A **manful** drunk is full to the **bung-hole** (the hole in a barrel); so full his **juice** is about to pour out. A young stud is **full of fuck**, or **spunk**. In England, a thick gravy with chunks of meat is called **bull fuck**. Mmm, mmm, good. [Since the hole can be on either side of the barrel, a **bungler** is either a male homosexual or a dismally bad lay.] An erection is ready to blow, to fly off **the handle** (the **pump-handle**, for which the vagina is the **pump**). Men are under a lot of pressure. The word **balls** is from *bhel*, to swell. And **cocks** ain't roosters, but **stopcocks**—which Americans call *faucets*. Anatomically the back of the throat is called the **fauces** (just ask Linda Lovelace). Like a **cocked** gun, a cocked man needs a touch of the hair trigger to **spew** (original meaning) his bullets.

MEN ON MUSIC

Rocking and rolling is sex. **Jazz** is **jism**.

MEN ON PENISES

There's a strange connection between penises and trees. **Woody**, **peckerwood**, **middle-stump**, **cudgel**, **staff**, **scepter**, **tent-peg**, **dart**, **stake**, **nail**, **rod**...the list, at least, is long. Although willing penises grow on trees, Freud said the connection reflected a boy's unwillingness to enter the strange world of puberty. Boys subconsciously consider their embarrassingly hard penises to have been cut from trees. No wonder men are afraid of **am-put-ation** (literally **cutting the pud off**) from the fabled **vaginal teeth**. It sure doesn't come out the way it went in.

MEN ON SEX

Sex comes from the same word as **section**, *to cut open*. The vulva is called **the wound that never heals**. Slangs like **gash** and **slit** certainly don't sound non-violent—even **cunt** is too close to **cut** for comfort. A man who is done with a woman **dismounts**, but language says he may also **decunt**.

MEN ON WOMANHOOD

The *fe* in **female** is the same as the *fe* in **fellatio**, from *felare*, to suck or suckle. To be fe-male is to be commanded **"suck men."**

MEN ON WOMEN'S BODIES

A woman is a **piece of ass**. Her parts part. To many men she is summarized as a **cunt**. Interestingly, once you're past all the **tits and ass** slang (**cunt-struck**, blinded by a woman's **headlights**, etc.), most of the slang for a woman's body is playful and benign. There's **bunny**, the **hairy oracle**, the **upright smile**, **hey-nonny-nonny** (...my boyfriend is back?), **crown and feathers**, and **monkey**. The soft and cuddly word **pussy** is just about an official title. **Vulva** is from a versatile Latin word with three meanings: *roll* (as in the blues lyric, "Roll me baby, lord how you **roll the dough**"), *turn* (a **screw**, or a **trick**), and *well* (as in **welling with juices**). A closely related word is **Volvo**. To be **vul**-nerable is to no longer be im-**preg**-nable. A women is best when she is **well-holed**, meaning satisfying, deep, or juicy.

MEN ON WOMEN ON WOMEN

Lesbians, poor girls, are condemned to **flat fuck** (another word for **clit** is **flat cock**). All they can do is **canyon yodel**, **muff bark**, **wash each other's bird**, or **talk to the little canoe driver**. Used to be, real men scoffed at the idea of ever **flying on their face** or taking up the **French** art of **nose painting**. Even now, **Dinner at the "Y"** is still a good way to get jailed in several states.

Women can of course just make do with a little **finkydiddle** (**diddling** with their finkies?) or some **canoodling**. Canoe, canoe?

MEN ON MEN ON MEN

It has never quite sunk-in that the "cradle of western civilization" was full of cradle-robbing **Greeks**. The anus remains a major focus of male attention, and a source of male "humor." The ass has even been the basis of stage acts. There was actually a Frenchman, Le Pettimaine, who was France's answer to the Victorian's. He had an entire stage act farting out specific candles from chandeliers across the stage, and playing various tunes, of some length, if reports of such things can be trusted. You can still see similar acts in Thailand—but with women and well-trained pet vaginas.

There are plenty of "humorous" male/anal protests such as **"Well fuck me pink"** and **"I got the shaft," "I got screwed,"** and **tight-assed**. And the ultimate: **I got fucked!** Is it a mystery why should **fuck you** should be a threat? The symbolic form, the **finger**, with knuckles for balls, tells the story. The **bird**, known since Roman times, is always pointed upward, in the **up yours** position. It's **up your ass.** We can presume that **prick** derived from dislike of the idea of *getting* pricked. Prick means to puncture, or to push upward (like "prick up one's ears"). It is dominance over another man that's the issue – *the* issue among most men. Forget about top gun; it's all about who's going to be **top dog**.

Words, as is well known, are foes of reality. - Joseph Conrac

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WHAT YOU SAY?

BY KITTY LU KEMIA

Although condemnation and oppression of homosexuality is still quite prevalent in this country, segregating its members into a sexually-oriented subculture, conditions were much worse prior to the "gay liberation" movement of the mid-to-late 1970s. Absorption into the digestive tract of mainstream culture has eliminated most of the linguistic nuances once indicative of lesbian and gay subculture. The movement unfortunately degenerated into an obsession with mainstream acceptance among lesbians and gays, replacing a colorful language with such banal terms as "lipstick lesbian", and "straight appearing, straight acting," with a perception of heterosexual identity as the the ultimate pursuit. The following terms disappeared when we realized that, to quote Anita Bryant, "orange juice isn't just for breakfast anymore."

WOMEN

A woman with a palatte for the same sex will eat a **vegetable** or engage in **kissing fish**. She may **ride the tuna boat**, or travel **south of the border**, a 1940s term for the vagina. A walk through the park may lead one to find a **pansy without a stem**, although the aggressive lesbian sporting a stem, or clitoris the size of a flacid penis is a **dicky broad**. The aggressor in a sexual encounter may **wear boxer shorts** and be quite **Frank**. If she argues the point with her muscles, she is known as a **dump truck**, while a **pick-up truck** roams the streets in search of other **slacks**. Rubbing vaginas together is moving **bumper to bumper**. For those who prefer to be alone, a **paper pussy** can be purchased from a newsstand to **joyce off** to. A **tit king** is attracted to large breasts. To **make scissors of somebody** is to masturbate another woman by rubbing her clitoris. A **dabbler** is a suburban housewife experimenting with lesbianism.

If a woman has mannish features, she may be described as having **village overtones**, a 1950s term referring to Greenwich Village in New York. A **baby butch** is a boyish, young lesbian. The typically uninitiated teenage girl is a **tender chick**.

MEN

When a homosexual male finally lands his **first dramatic role**, it is with **Adam**, the name for the first man he has sex with. An **antique dealer** is interested in marrying an older, wealthy man. Hustlers, as entertainment, are as risky as television and one may launch into a **commercial** about why he hustles, or perhaps about his sexual prowess.

To satisfy sexual hunger, there is the local **steak house**, a bar or club where sex openly occurs. For those who prefer public restrooms, a quick afternoon snack is available at the **luncheonette**, or **tearoom**. These types of encounters usually yield nothing more than a fast-food **zipper dinner**. An **appetizer** is the first course of the day. The newly initiated are referred to as **fresh fruit**. A preference for **unsliced** or **Kosher meat**, or **Canadian bacon** indicates a taste for the uncircumcised. To eat ass is to **toss a salad**, or eat a piece of **dingle-berry pie**. If one is into transsexuals, he might try a **danish pastry**. **Lunch meat** refers to the more well-known **basket**. If the balls are sunburned, they're **scalloped potatoes**. A good fuck, as is the case with any good meal, generally needs **cocktail oil** or **wishbone salad dressing**, recommended for lubrication. A **menu** is a list of availables graffiti-scrawled on a bathroom wall. A **baker's dozen** is a group of attractive young men, who may congregate at the local **flower house** for espresso.

Bumping pussies signifies two men whose sexual activities are so similar they are unable to enjoy sex. Relations are considered **incest** when two clones engage. The performance between two similar types is also known as a **sister act**. If one is afraid of being raped, he is mysteriously said to have **a bad case of the tins**, a phrase which originated in the '30s. One entering through either the **alleyway** or **back door** is described as an **anus bandit**. The parted mouth of one, perhaps poised before rough, straight trade, is sometimes called **skull pussy**. That certainly sounds enticing. The athletic type will probably find a willing **jock warmer**. A **dry rub** refers to sexually provocative wrestling. **Sporty** applies to anyone willing to at least experiment with homosexuality. These types are also known as **agreeable**.

Those in the military are plurally referred to as **campfire girls**, and **girl scout** in the singular. **Government inspected meat** originated in the '60s, along with the term **khaki pussy**. Sailors are regarded as **seafood**.

Oh, and by the way: for those who feel so inclined to volunteer their talents, BID can always employ the skills of another **Brenda Starr**, the term for writers and reporters. Send your **Q-card** (or calling card) with a sample today.

The adjective is the banana peel of the parts of speech. —Clifton Fadiman

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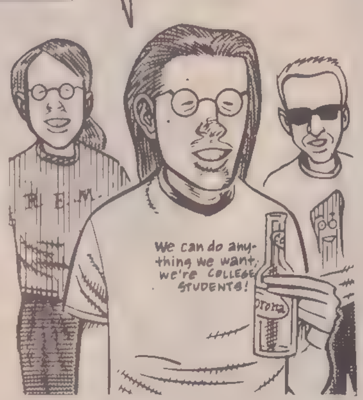
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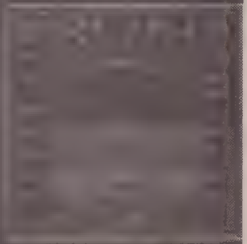

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[illegible] and bound, trussed up in a body bag and slung in the boot of a car destined for the long-term car park in hell? Yes Yes, but we want to dance too, you reply. Then step this way." —Melody Maker

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NO MEANS NO: ENGLISH MADE SIMPLE FOR RAPISTS AND OTHER MORONS

BY NINA DENTATA

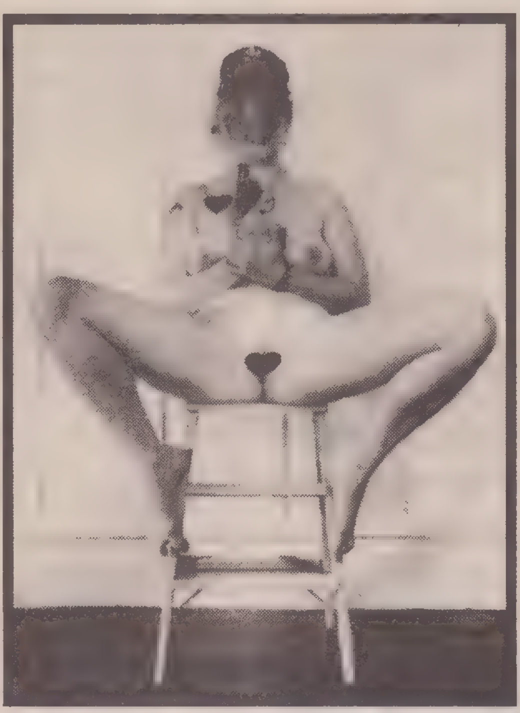


PHOTO: MICHELLE HANDELMAN. TAKEN FROM *TASTE OF LATEX* MAGAZINE.

Let's get one thing straight, I hate rapists. And, everybody knows that all rapists are men. (No, Linda Blair movies do not count as proof against this fact. I'm talking reality here.) If life were logical, this might make me equate my feelings for all rapists with all men. But, unfortunately, life isn't logical and, unfortunately I actually find the company of some men absolutely delightful. So rather than allow my negative experiences of several men define my perceptions about all of them, I've taken it upon myself to evaluate my complex emotions toward males case by case.

Why? Because I, Nina Dentata, am too fucking nice, that's why. I'm so fucking forgiving I wake up every morning half expecting to have the god damn stigmata appear on my palms. But my tolerance level is peaking. This TV news reporter standing outside of the apartment building down the street informed me and the rest of LA that there's a serial rapist running loose in my neighborhood. Great. Like, I don't have enough to deal with everyday. Now I'm supposed to worry about finding some overgrown asshole sitting on my face in the middle of the night. *I just don't have time for that.* OK, sure, being a woman, living alone and everything, you don't have to live in Bosnia to have the rape threat lurking around in some late-night corner of your mind. But somehow when they put your address on TV as the next target of dangerous levels of testosterone you are confronted with a new level of the menace.

Suddenly, you realize how alone you really are by the peripheral reactions to your situation. Unanimously my family and friends offered, "You're welcome to come over and stay at my house for a few days until the police catch him." Of course I appreciated these chivalrous offers. But first, I don't put that much faith in the police and second, am I really supposed to try to move away from anyplace where there is a potential rapist? Think about it. And besides, a response more like, "Listen, me and the boys are getting our AR's loaded up and are going to do a little night patrol for you until this jerkoff is buried," would have made me feel a little better. Look, as far as I'm concerned, most men don't have to deal with violent misogynists everyday, so they can afford to spend a little time staying up all night guarding my neighborhood. Because if you ask me, the last thing men need is more unconstructive free time. I mean, I'd like to know where the hell they find all the time to terrorize and pillage the rest of us in the first place. Serial killing, rape, carjacking, kidnapping, armed robbery — pretty time-intensive hobbies there, Mr. Jones...

So anyway, I said fuck that "packing up and leaving for a few days" bullshit. I packed up all right but I am staying, and let me tell you, this girl, she is doing it for herself. I went over to Koreatown, bought some hollow tips for my 9, and had a neon sign made for my front door that says "Make My Day." Whenever I go out I put on this big hooded parka to better conceal my numerous deadly weapons. I'm starting to feel like Ice T's evil twin: Ice Latte, the dope Polish/Italian-American rap gangsta.

Today, when I walked into work and my Japanese co-worker chirped a cheerful "Good morning," I couldn't stop myself from saying, "Yeah zoom a zoom and a boom boom to you, bitch." Then I flashed two fingers at our video editors, "Yo, word." They became kind of quiet and stared back at me blankly. I guessed they were trying to think of a quick response , so I politely waited... and waited. Hmmm... I really needed to find a way to switch these guys from pause to at least a slow-motion search mode. I mean, these guys are the type who waited until Magic contracted AIDS to finally consider using condoms, and start to realize that sex can actually affect your life longer than you maintain an erection. Anyway, they finally caught on that this serial rapist thing was kind of getting to me and said, "It's so weird you have to worry about that kind of stuff." Hmmm. "Weird?... Weird?... You... mean... as... .in... not... the... norm?" I asked them in negative warp speed, slowing down my voice to a velocity that might actually trigger some kind of synapsis in their brain resembling a thought. But taking one look at their dumbfounded faces, I realized the absolute futility, "Wait, don't answer that, just Fed Ex me your response", and hip-hopped out of the room. How could they possibly not understand that women have to deal with this kind of shit all the time? Why is it that the straighter the guy is, the slower he is? Not that stupidity can't work for some men, take Keanu Reeves for example, but these dudes utterly lacked the talent to work it.

Being the Nancy Drew wanna-be that I am (it's no coincidence that our initials are the same) I did some investigative research and found some essential psychobiological tidbits to help me understand *why* men can often seem so clued-out. Y indeed. Of course, we all remember that males have only one X chromosome. What I didn't know was that the X chromosome carries all the genetic info and the Y has nothing on it but the info that makes men male. Women have two X chromosomes and thus double the genetic information. So, if women have one recessive gene for some genetically determined trait on one X chromosome, but carry one dominant one for the same trait on the other X chromosome, the dominant gene wins out. Biologically, women are afforded more complexity in their genetic make-up; men, with only one X chromosome, are not so lucky.

For boys and men, aggression does not preclude friendship. Quite the contrary, it is a good way to start interaction and create involvement. —Deborah Tannen Ph.D

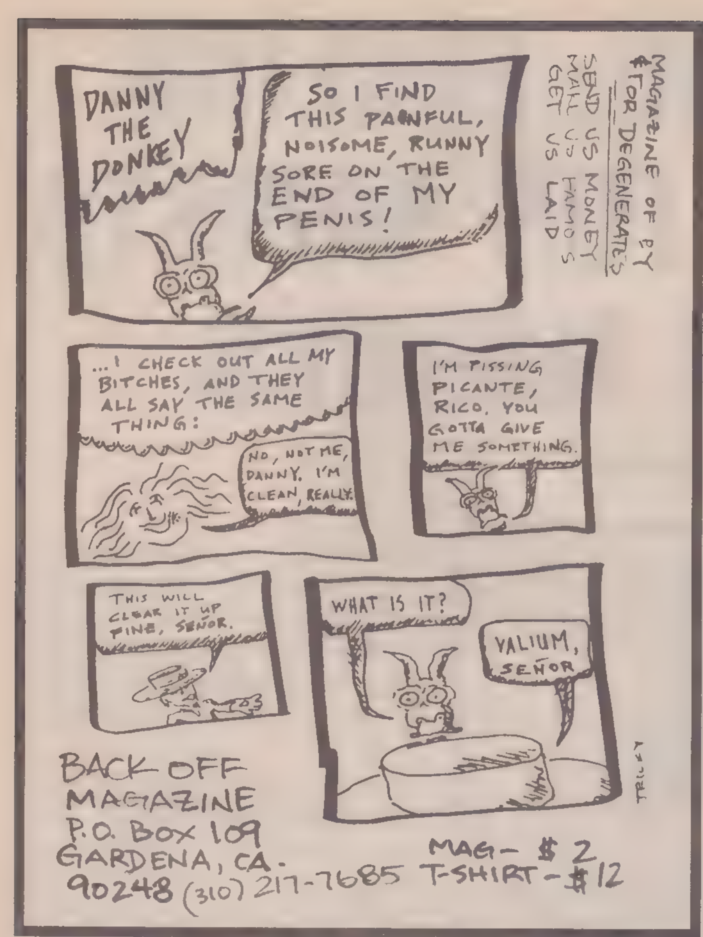
Thus, males are more likely to have behavioral tendencies that are biologically determined. For instance, it seems that male hormones, androgens, make men inclined to lack a certain responsiveness to external stimulus. Ever notice how loud jocks talk? Well there you have it. And what's more, this need for extra stimuli also makes them more prone to violent behavior.

Hey buddy, calm down. Look, don't get mad at me – facts are facts. Don't try to argue with Mother Nature, just take it like a man or you're going to start sounding like some '70s feminist. I mean, American feminism has always tried to show how similar men and women are despite their genetic, hormonal, and even more obvious differences. Quite an amazing endeavor! Indeed, for me, the most impressive thing about '70s feminism is that it demonstrated the incredible persuasive power of women. Getting people to think that there are no physical differences between men and women was really a fabulously successful prank up there with Richard Gere marrying Cindy Crawford. Not only did it serve the purpose of advancing women in the work place, but it confused everyone by questioning the concept of gender roles.

This whole date rape thing being battled out on college campuses and women's talk shows is so symptomatic of essentially different people being misguided into thinking they are somehow similar and thus understanding of what the other person wants. I mean, Camille Paglia, though undigestible in a feminist humanitarism of rights and wrongs (and severely self-deluded if she thinks she looks like Madonna) actually has a point. Just because *ideally* we feminists like to think that you should be able to wear as little as you want, get as fucked up as you want, come on to whomever you want, willingly get into a compromising position with someone and still say "Stop!" when you realize you're losing control of the situation, doesn't always make it a feasible possibility. Excuse my common sense approach, but let's do a reality check here. Sex is a complex thing, an intricate negotiation of cultural, biological and primal desires and needs. Sexual encounters are full of subtle innuendos and the intensely powerful push – pull of domination and submission. As children we play with this power and often we lose. However, we can learn a lot about our boundaries, without a need to call in the law; and if the the pain doesn't kill us, we may actually grow. Hard as it seems for people to admit these days, sometimes we are attracted to people and situations that are no good for us, that may even hurt us, and sometimes we love them for precisely that reason.

Why? It's a fucking mystery, that's why. Not even science is going to help us figure it out. But, instead of insisting on right and wrong based on some shaky common ground, I suggest we get into expressing our differences. There's nothing wrong with saying, "I'm different from you, I don't understand you, but that's cool." So many people these days are openly, in various levels, developing a gender identity. Men who like to look like women and the women who love them and women who like to look like women and the women who love them, and so on and so on. With so much variety, it's a multi-sexual extravaganza!!. It's like when I was a kid and I got to stay at my grandparents house who I conned into buying me the variety breakfast cereal pack, so I could have Sugar Pops, Lucky Charms, Fruit Loops and Rice Krispies all in the same week. Oh, yummm!!! If you ask me there is nothing more boring than serial cereal.

Except maybe serial rapists. Not only are they boring and tired, they're exhausting. I still have trouble sleeping; with this guy lurking around the 'hood, I'm anxious about waking up to the battle of the sexes already in progress in the bed of my mind. Especially 'cuz I know I'll win. I mean, I really don't want to have to waste the shit-for-brains: Bad karma. And, I certainly don't have the funds to get large quantities of blood cleaned out of my carpet. But, sometimes the only way to get through to some morons is in a language that goes straight to their Y chromosome. Like I learned from the movie *Alien*, you'd better kill the beast while you have him in front of you or he'll multiply and come back with a vengeance. God, I'm butch. Maybe I'll shave my head and do a Sigourney thing?? No, no one remembers Sigourney, it would only read Sinead. What was I thinking? I must be getting delirious from sleep deprivation. All I know for sure is that I, Nina Dentata, want to sleep peacefully tonight. Is that so much to ask? Wait – on second thought, don't answer that.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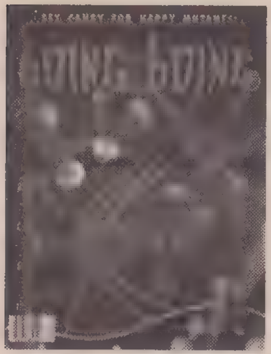

FUTURE Sex
CYBERSEX
SMART APHRODISIACS

One decade ago. a worldwide, fiber optic computer network, "Ether Net", was established. Today, most major universities and large corporations across the U.S. are connected to this "Net", or to similar systems across the "developed" world. While information wings around the world at 100 Megabytes per second, hackers, students, and their kid siblings are now using this awesome power for their own nefarious ends. As computer prices drop, and links to the global electronic network open even wider, channels of communication and vast libraries of knowledge are increasingly available to individuals from every socio-economic group in existence. The distinction between underground/obscure and mainstream/omnipresent dissolves like Alka Seltzer in a glass of water. Cyberpunk, a term *not* connected to the *Wild Palms* television series, [etc.], *does* accurately describe several thrilling new rags interested in the attractive embroidery of cutting-edge technology and electronic communication with "alternative" art, music, culture, and personal identity. We spoke with editors Mark Frauenfelder, *bOING bOING*, Lisa Palac, *Future Sex*, and R.U. Sirius, *Mondo 2000*, about all of this irradiated monkey-talk, and the meaning of electronic terrorism in this Brave New World.

Years before Mondo 2000 *took cyber-everything to the bored masses, and the cover of* Time *magazine, Mark Frauenfelder and his wife Carla Sinclair were quietly publishing* **bOING bOING!**, *exploring their take on the growing cyber/communications revolution, and how it has influenced the underground. The magazine is not overly polished, but has really interesting articles and new ideas, and is also refreshingly readable! The articles don't hide in a jungle of jargon and psuedo Burroughsian nonsense. The people who complain that* Mondo 2000 *is too glossy, poorly written, or confusing to read might find* **bOING bOING!** *a more "reader-friendly" source.* **bOING bOING!** *has also begun sponsoring a series of Cyber Sex dance-club nights in association with [club] FUCK!.*

Ethan Port

OK. First the "dirt" question: Is Carla's sister really Christy Canyon?

What gave you that idea?

There's been a rumor circulating...

Carla said she's not sure...

How long have you been married?

We married in 1988, around the time we started *bOING bOING!*.

Why did you start *bOING bOING!* ?

I had been doing little mini-comics for awhile and was kind of interested in fanzines. I was also interested in how technology was getting cheap enough so that it could get into the hands of hippies, weirdos, artists, and people who normally didn't have access to computers. People were doing interesting things like trying to alter one's consciousness with a computer, or getting a computer or modem for $500, and publishing an electronic zine that would potentially be available to millions or billions of people, that would only cost you a few dollars (if that) of connect time in, order to spread some pretty weird messages that normally wouldn't reach the minds of people that quickly. I was also interested in cyberpunk and science fiction at the time, and psychedelia, and underground comics. Basically, starting *bOING bOING!* was a good way to get cool stuff in the mailbox to play with for free.

So you started your magazine before *Mondo 2000*?

Yeah, we started our magazine a few years before, but *Mondo* is the one that has all the money. Their circulation is about 10 times as big as ours. That doesn't bother me because our circulation is about 12,000 now and we're growing with every issue. One comment we get about *bOING bOING!* is that people like to read it cover to cover, and you can't get that comment about too many magazines. Except *Ben Is Dead*, of course. I read the Sex Issue cover to cover.

What do you think about cyberpunk as a concept, and virtual reality? How much is plausible at the present, and how much is unrealistic fantasy?

It's an interesting question. I think a lot of cyberpunk has jumped the gun on things and, in a way, that's not been good. People have gotten really excited about nano-technology and virtual reality way before anything of much substance has happened, so after a couple years people will get really bored. I can see why some say that cyberpunk should have stayed in science fiction and not have bleeped out. But in another way I like technology used for purposes that were not originally intended.

What's your internet address on the WELL?

It's MARK@WELL.SF.CA.US. The WELL is a cool place because we have a public *bOING bOING!* conference there where readers can write and give us instant feedback to the articles, and challenge the authors' statements, and stuff like that. We also have a private conference which is not private to hide secrets, but is a place where all the editors can meet everyday to brainstorm on new ideas, and copy edit, and conduct the day to day business of the magazine. We only have a few people here in L.A., but we have other editors spread around, like in Washington D.C., Austin, San Francisco, and New York, and we can all meet in cyberspace. It's like the old radio days in cyberspace, but this is text-based communication in cyberspace. We imagine it'll be more graphical as time goes on.

What technology is available now for sending live images over the telephone?

There are people working on it. We're thinking of

Computers are uselss. They can only give you answers. - Pablo Picasso running an article on how to make your own stereo, head-mounted color display for under $300. That's one thing about cyberpunk I like, ripping apart old, obsolete computers and finding new uses for them. People are doing it in the streets and in the garages. And of course the big companies are working on it too. But the people in the garages already have stuff available. You can get the 3-D virtual reality software for free on Compuserve and other places. And they are the people doing it for the love of it, not for the money. Money is a powerful incentive to be creative, but it's never as great as the desire to learn.

What new projects do you have planned?

Our next issue is about fun and games. What people do for recreation, and weird toys, like animal torture simulation, and sanitized filth – things you can't buy from Toys R Us! We also did a club with FUCK! one night called Cyber Sex, Inc.. It was an experiment to see what would happen if we put the bondage/modern primitive people in the same room as the happy cyberpunk people. We're planning on doing another one of those. The *bOING bOING!* people seemed kinda intimidated by the bondage folk, but the modern primitives seemed pretty interested in the cyber stuff.

What do you think of *Future Sex*?

I think the second issue was better than the first, but it's still a little light. I think they have a ways to go, but it's a great idea, a magazine devoted to "future sex", and they are the only ones exploring it regularly. I think our last sex issue did a good job exploring it.

There are some net zines, aren't there? Electronic zines you can read on your computer?

Yeah, there is *Future Culture*, *Scream Baby*, and *Phrac*. There's also a big bulletin board system called *Mind Vox*, which is like an East Coast version of the WELL. Actually, there are just tons of virtual zines out there on all sorts of topics, like psychedelic drugs, cyberpunk… There's one called *Fringe Ware* which talks about new technology being developed, and some is offered for sale or trade.

Didn't *Phrac* get in trouble with the Secret Service?

Yeah, what happened is that someone had broken into the computer files of the phone company and taken a document about the 911 telephone number. It wasn't anything about how to hack 911, it was more of an administrative maintenance type of thing. No one could have done any damage with it. The file was passed around from bulletin board to bulletin board. And someone at *Phrac* magazine thought it'd be interesting to run the document, just to show, "Look what we were able to pull off the system", kinda like a hackers' trophy. So it spread pretty fast to other computers, and the Secret Service and the phone company found out about it. They freaked out that someone was able to break into their system. So he was arrested and had to go to trial, and he eventually got off, but it cost his family $100,000. And the thing about it is that other people were busted just for downloading and reading it! Some guy from a bulletin board called the phone company or the police to tell them what he had found uploaded on his system, and they rewarded that behavior by raiding his house, taking his computer, and all his files and discs and everything.

Carla Sinclair

Did these people get their equipment back?

Some people did. A lot of people got busted in this "Operation Sundevil." It was a cooperative effort between the Secret Service and local police. Steve Jackson Games had all their equipment taken, and just a few weeks ago they won a law suit against the Secret Service; so they just recently got their stuff back. They proved that it was unlawful for the Secret Service to enter their house with a sealed, unopened search warrant and seize the computers they use to develop games. They won a token amount of like $50,000, which doesn't even cover their court costs, much less the money they lost by being put out of business for a year. They had to lay off half their staff. It really hurt them.

We just heard the same story about Offworld. [see article page 84]

Yeah, it's interesting. When the *New York Times* printed the Pentagon Papers... those documents were stolen. Why didn't the Secret Service go in and seize the presses of the *New York Times*? It's interesting that First Amendment rights don't seem to apply to computer users or modems, and that's a scary thing. I think one reason for this is that the government doesn't really understand computers and modems; however, what they do understand is that it is so easy to pass information around anonymously, that you can encrypt files and pass them around all over the place without being traced. They understand that information can be transferred to many people really quickly, but they don't understand the technology enough to control it, except to bust people indiscriminately and take away their computers without criminal charges or arrests. They are trying to solve the problem by outlawing it de facto, or forbidding any kind of activity like that. But there are organizations like the Electronic Freedom Foundation, that are fighting these illegal raids and stuff. They can be reached at EFF@WELL.SF.CA.US, or BARLOW@WELL.SF.CA.US.

Have you heard of anyone being convicted on any of these charges?

Not to my knowledge. They generally just try to bleed the person dry: make them incur the court and legal costs. They usually drop the charges, or never level any at all, because the cases usually don't have any merit. The guy from *Phrac* was charged with something like possession of stolen documents. It's interesting that the press doesn't seem very interested in these cases. They like to report a big kiddie porn bust, but they don't follow up on the reality of situations.

It's kinda scary, because the government could easily plant some illegal picture file, even in an encrypted form, so that the BBS owner wouldn't even know what it was. It would be uploaded anonymously, so you could never prove the government uploaded it. Then they could bust you. If they used a simple English word for the password, they could "crack" the file through a brute force method, like in that book *The Cuckoo's Egg*. You'd have no way to defend yourself against being framed. And it appears that people are assumed guilty just for having the files on their system.

Yeah, it's really interesting, to have electronic data patterns that are controlled substances, like drugs.

But they never have to physically be there to plant the stuff. Boy, you could get really paranoid about that! You could be arrested, tried, and convicted, and never even know what was there on the system!

Well, people like Senator Joseph Biden are trying to pass legislation that would require every piece of software to have a back door so the government can decode any encrypted data. That's a pretty sickening and dangerous thought. Having the government take away the right to privacy, that's what it boils down to.

I wonder if people as a whole will become aware of this and make a big stink.

Cyberspace is where you are when you're talking on the telephone. –John Barlow

Well, most people don't care. They don't think they'll ever have to pass any data that's confidential. But as computers are used more and more for business and stuff, like tax records and all, there's all sorts of data the government shouldn't be allowed to look at unless they have a valid reason and go through the proper procedures. They shouldn't be able to eavesdrop on your phone line, copy the data going over your modem, and send you to jail for what they find! They shouldn't have a little back-door password to allow them to open up your whole private and financial life! Some guy made some encryption software called PGS for Pretty Good Software after he heard about this legislation being considered. He distributes it free all over the place. It's "public key" software, so you can publish a public key with your user address, and people can send you encrypted messages, and you can only decode it using the second half of the key which is known only to you. The only way to read the file is for you to unlock it with the second half of the key. So even if people eavesdrop they can never decode your e-mail files. That gives the public a pretty good defense against this legislation, since half the password is separate from the system.

If you're arrested you can just say you forgot your password! I understand that it is virtually impossible to "crack" those "trap-door" type passwords provided you use a long enough, non-dictionary word.

It gives good protection to private BBS owners.

It's interesting that the United States was founded by a bunch of creative scientists, who were very skeptical of the world around them, and they had big town meetings, and really defended the right, at least for white men, to be able to speak freely about anything. Ben Franklin was certainly no prude! Then as the population grew, people became more and more isolated in big cities. We all just watch TV passively. And now it seems that this new technology might really bring us back to a society that communicates interactively with each other.

Well, in the early days of this country, people on the edge were not allowed to meet together. Nowadays if the fringe groups meet on a computer they'll be harder to stomp out, but it certainly scares the government now that it's so much harder to wipe out an unpalatable group.

Yeah, but if you really are a "bad guy," the government has a lot of secret technology. They can read the keys you type on your computer from a few miles away by pointing a laser to your window!

I could see in hindsight where the government might wish it had taxed modems, to try to make them more expensive, so they'd only be used for business purposes. But, even if they did, you could build your own from parts from Radio Shack.

Contact info: bOING bOING!, *11288 Ventura Blvd., #818, Studio City, CA 91604. Four issues $14 USA.*

PHOTO: ANNIE SPRINKLE

Lisa Palac

Lisa Palac is the editor of **Future Sex** *magazine, a glossy-papered exploration of all aspects of modern sexuality and erotica, including sex and technology.* **Future Sex** *has a very matter-of-fact attitude ,without being as boring as Dr. Ruth. We telephoned Lisa at her Kundalini Publishing offices in San Francisco.*

Ethan: Why do you think Cyber-Sex, Raves, and X-tasy are all connected together in the current underground?

Lisa: Well, I've experienced Cyber-Sex-X-tasy-Rave in my own mind, but I think they are connected together as a movement of a new generation. X-tasy is really the psychedelic of the '90s, and there's this unisex approach to living life and having a good time. Gender bending is involved in all three of those things, so that's probably what makes the combination so interesting. And true cyberpunk has this unisex and gender-blurring approach to erotic experimentation, having fun, and having a good time... new frontiers, and looking into the unknown.

Do smart drugs really do anything? I figure if someone is doing a lot of drugs, then taking a lot of vitamins will probably make you feel better, perhaps even smarter. But most people I know who have tried them haven't noticed much of a difference. I think there is this old "aphrodisiac" myth attached to smart drugs.

Yeah, I've never noticed much of anything, although Jim Engles swears by them. We did give my good friend Susie Bright a "Smart Aphrodisiac" called "G", although I don't know what that stood for, and she really tripped out and threw up all over the place, so she did have *some* kind of strong reaction to it. Although, as soon as she was recovering I couldn't wait to get my hands on it and try it out for myself, and it didn't do anything for me.

As far as drugs go, people are always interested in going into an altered state, whether they'll admit it or not. That's why you like rides at the amusement park, or twirling yourself around, because for a split second you're in an altered state. So, smart products are like having training wheels on your drug experimentation. And like any vitamins, you'd probably have to take them for a long time to notice a significant change. A lot of it might be hype, and again, individual body chemistry

File Control
Please, remove my bustierre...it's a little snug.

reacts differently to different things – like drinking coffee...

With AIDS and everything, you can't just get all fucked up and go home with whomever, but with all this gender experimentation, and flashy techno dance music, people are trying to experience some kind of altered reality. Do you see some of this "techno" culture as an attempt to achieve these altered states in a more controlled way?

Definitely. The trend in music and pop culture towards more freedom of sexual expression probably comes from an attempt to get some of that energy out in a more controlled way. And part of it is just, "The times, they ARE a changing." And the pendulum is swinging the other way. When you come out of a period, like the late '80s, of political repression and economic recession, there will always be people who will rebel against that and find new hope. I think we're seeing that in the way people are talking about sex, and dressing for sex, and having safe sex parties, and safe sex clubs, and having sex themes at clubs and raves, and all those things with erotic themes is a way to talk about it and have fun in a more controlled and accepting way. It's really great to say, "Hey, I'm not just a weirdo putting on latex in my closet by myself," but to find that other people are doing that too, which builds a sense of community around that expression and feeds on itself. Five years ago wearing a bra and g-string to a night club was completely outrageous, and people thought you were out of your mind, and now it is completely normal and you say, "Oh God, yawn, more black bras, what will happen next?" And even though people poo-poo the erotic fashion trend, I think it is a real positive step.

We've heard about these mixed and all-womyn safe sex clubs in San Francisco. Do you think these have been successful?

Well, there's a new one called Eros. Most of them haven't lasted too long. There's a private community that puts them on, that you have to tap into somehow. I've found that I prefer to go with someone I know really well. In my fantasy, in my head, I have this sort of Greek myth where I walk into this room of strangers who have their way with me, or I have *my* way with a group of people and run the show. But in reality there is a very strong emotional and human element, and it's hard to play when you're in a room full of people that you just don't know, and perhaps aren't physically attracted to. I mean, we'd all like to think, "Everyone is beautiful," but we all have our own ideas of what's physically attractive, and I personally can't have sex with someone I'm not physically attracted to... I know, as politically incorrect as that seems, that's how it is for me. I have to be turned on. And of course there's a whole range of what turns me on, it's not always physical attraction. Sometimes you meet a person, and you think, "She's not such a beauty," or "He's not so hot," but then you talk to them and find yourself turned on by their ideas, and pretty soon you find them really sexy.

Often at these sex parties your head and your crotch are in two different places, and there's a lot of emotions that come into play... I prefer to go with someone I feel really comfortable with, and do more exhibitionist type things, like, "Spank me in front of this crowd, that will turn me on." I've never been able to walk into a crowded room and say, "Let's get it on." It's hard enough to walk into a room of clothed strangers and strike up a conversation, much less to go down and start blowing someone. Also, people have a lot of trouble with sexual honesty. Even on BBSs, like on the WELL, there are a lot of sexual topics, but people's first impulse when they talk about these subjects is to talk in the abstract, and I always say, "Cut to the good parts already!" So there's this constant push-me-pull-me of wanting to be public *and* wanting to be private with your sexuality.

Sex can lose its mystery and seduction by letting it all out.

And if you want to keep some mystery about sex, then you're labeled "up tight". But I think having the discussion about it and having a lot of tolerance for people's choices is the important thing.

At least people are admitting to and embracing masturbation.

I know, isn't that great! "Now I can finally tell all!" Yeah, what a big confession! "Hey, I also eat food everyday, too!"

What was the original idea behind *Future Sex*?

Actually it wasn't my idea. I was living in San Francisco and working as an editor for *On Our Backs*, and doing a lot of freelance writing for some adult publications about sex, which is my favorite topic, and I got a call one day to contribute to this magazine, and I never heard from them, so I kept calling them up saying, "What's going on? Where's this new magazine? When's it coming out?" And they finally called me and asked, "Why don't you help put it out?" So I got on board, and they had this loose idea to do a groovy sex magazine incorporating technology and stuff, but we weren't really sure exactly what it would be about. I was the third editor to work on it. In fact R.U. Sirius worked on it for a while. And I was the first editor to get it off the ground. That's why the first issue was such a hodgepodge of ideas. The magazine's been growing a lot since then. Now with the third issue there's more of a honed vision of what it is, which contrary to popular belief is not just "cybersex, VR and goggles, and digital porn and hardware." The "future" part of *Future Sex* really means growing and having a much more enlightened view of sexuality. So we're really tracking trends of the here and now, as well as the future, in terms of sex and culture, and looking to see if these issues reflect issues of the past. So, *Future Sex* is about talking about sex in all its forms, from lots of different angles, and from different cultural perspectives, including the technological aspects, which are an important part of it, but not the whole enchilada.

Your magazine seems more egalitarian than *On Our Backs*.

Well *On Our Backs* is a lesbian magazine, and ours is for everyone...

Even though more men probably buy *On Our Backs* than women.

(Laughter) And people tend to be so critical of anything erotic or pornographic, and tell you, "Well, THAT'S not erotic." I think my next magazine will be called "*That's Not Erotic.*" That way people won't have any hopes that it'll be erotic, and lo-and-behold, if they're turned on by something, they'll be pleasantly surprised. People's first impulse is to criticize you, because there's so little good material out there that when you put something out people glom onto it like, 'I'm the Erotic Messiah,' and I am supposed to represent all sexual interests of all people everywhere. But the magazine is our vision, the vision of the people who work on it. If you have your own vision, put [a magazine] out yourself. Don't wait for it to come to you.

But a lot of people prefer to be voyeurs rather than participants. It's very one-sided. I guess we can't *all* be voyeurs.

Especially when it comes to sex, there is such stigma attached to it. You put yourself at risk. For example, even though it's so cool and trendy to be a stripper and walk naked at sex clubs, to actually run one, and to put your time and money and reputation on the line with your own face attached to it is really difficult. And people feel that some other area of their life will be ruined or tainted if it's associated with pornography. There are still so many obstacles to overcome, that just the day-to-day running of *Future Sex* – from getting ads to getting the separations and printing – is a full time job. I'm always pulling apart

Technology is almost magical. –Bill Clinton and analyzing peoples attitudes about sex and selling people on the idea that, "Yeah, this is a good thing. Sex is OK." So much of my time is spent convincing people that "Sex is OK," and that we're not a bunch of child molesters fucking dogs under my desk. I don't think it'll happen, but I do run the risk of going to jail for this magazine. But I'm always encouraging people to take that challenge. Our motto is, "Only *You* Can Prevent Bad Pornography and Erotic Disaster."

What other projects do you have?

We have an unprecedented product called *Cybergasm*. It's a aural CD collection of Virtual Audio pieces. It includes a tantric sex mantra by Annie Sprinkle, pieces by Susie Bright, various combinations of people having sex, and a really kinky piece called "Mistress Cat" (a well known dominitrix). There are a lot of sensual and erotic sounds, including people having sex. A lot was recorded using "sonic rendering," so it's not just a replication of real life. It comes with a poster, a rubber, and a chipboard blindfold. You don't need any special equipment to hear the 3-dimensional effect. You just need a pair of headphones. It really creates this "You Are There" experience, because it images the sound in 3-D all around you, using the cycle acoustic effect. So if someone snips a scissors near your ear, your hair will stand on end and you'll move your head away, and if a car rushes by you you'll move around, because the sound tricks your other senses into believing it's there. Of all the Virtual Reality stuff I've tried, I think the acoustic field is the most up and ready. [Note: We listened to a copy of Cyber-gasm and the 3-D effect really works! You shoulda seen Joe Z. jump when Mistress Cat cracked her whip! We all thought much of the content of the C.D. was sorta weak, but it's worth getting just to hear the 3-D effect!]

How developed is VR?

I'm the biggest critic of it. I think I'm much more hopeful about what VR will bring in the future, rather than what's available now. I'm more into the basics now like feeling good about sex, rather than "What machines can we fuck?" So I haven't put all my chips in the VR basket, although the promise of it is really interesting and exciting...especially the idea that any fantasy is possible and you can have a very physical experience with that.

Any closing thoughts?

We're a forward-thinking magazine dealing with the present. I'm a pretty "low-tech" girl. We try to make information accessible to everyone. Most people are interested in sex, and we don't want to be an "elitist" or "insider" zine. We don't claim to be unraveling all the mystery behind sex. Sex is a powerful and mysterious thing. It's unknowable and unfathomable. I don't want to drain that power.

Contact info: Future Sex, *1095 Market St., #809, San Francisco, CA 94103. Four issue subscription $18.*

R.U.Serious with Simone of Mondo Vanilli

R.U.Sirius is the creator and editor-in-chief of **Mondo 2000**, *a magazine dedicated to Cyberpunk and other forms of modern and future cultural subversion. The common thread here seems to be the utilization of technology to cut the throat of our society. Recently R.U.Sirius has begun a live three piece performance/music group called* ***Mondo Vanilli.*** *The demo tape wasn't half bad for a couple of computer nerds. We'll give the C.D. a proper review in a future issue, but we can tell you that the songs are pretty humorous and danceable. We interviewed R.U. via Internet e-mail, to grill him on his take on Cyberpunk, Cybertrash, and Cyberimpairment.*

Ethan: When did you start *Mondo 2000*?

R.U.Serious: *Mondo* started in 1990. I started it to be cool... no, ummmm... I was inspired by Bruce Sterling's introduction to *Mirrorshades* and wanted to point out to the world that our culture was already *there.*

What were you doing before its inception?

I was editing a zine called *Reality Hackers* be4 *Mondo*. Before that it was a psychedelic mag called *High Frontiers*... was a yippie, wrote award winning fiction in college, was in a punk/funk band Party Dogs in Rochester N.Y., moved to Berkeley, worked as a phone salesperson... I hate history, actually.

So what *is* your definition of cyberpunk? A lot of people think it's just Raves, Smart Drugs, grown-up hackers and Virtual Reality/Sex.

Ok, well if we *must*. The term cyberpunk came from a science fiction critic trying to define the works of William Gibson, Bruce Sterling and a few other writers. Cyberpunk science fiction represented a real break with science fiction as an extension of industrialism or even science fiction as an extension of hippie/psychedelic head tripping ala Dick, Spinrad and people who were associated with Science Fiction's new wave. Basically cyberpunk said that the technos that was going to form the human situation in the future could now be clearly seen. It wasn't going to be Captain Kirk or some hippie equivalent traversing the galaxies in a huge space craft in the same old human form standing in front of some glistening huge master computer. It's going to involve tiny things, incredible processing power in the tiniest of things, you see... nanotechnology –

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the ability to manipulate matter at the molecular level, technology that goes under the skin and the ability to manipulate neurochemistry, prosthetics – replaceable parts... we're already deep into it, biologicial mutations of the human form... all of this stuff was implicit or explicit in the works of the cyberpunks. Furthermore, it was going to happen in a fin de siecle, chaotic-urban-nightmarish-late-capitalism kind of situation with all of the logical futuristic extensions of the various alienated subcultures and the self-conscious ironies and cruelties of big media and multinational corporate power. Cyberpunk escaped science fiction to become a sort of identity, I think, very soon after the sci-fi guys were sick of it. Young computer crackers and *very* hard core industrial artists like Survival Research Labs adapted this identity to some degree... I think *that* was cyberpunk. All of this other stuff, *Mondo 2000*, VR, Raves, as larger cultural phenomena came afterward. Cyberpunk remains a kind of media buzzword, though when it hits *Time* magazine, it's currency is all but spent. *Mondo 2000* covers VR, though not in every single issue. The evolution of this technology remains an area of intrigue for people looking at the sort of evolution of communications and information technology into a kind of species-wide human brain and nervous system. It still *can* be interesting to talk about... but once in a *fucking* while, thank you. *Mondo* almost never covers raves or smart drugs, yet we're sort of saddled with these things. It's a drag because what happens is people hear *Mondo* 2000 is about this culture of VR, smart drugs and raves. So they go out and try these things out, and after it's over they say, "Well, that sucks. I'd rather watch Ren and Stimpy on caffeine and go out moshing to some hard core punk." SO WOULD I! That's *not Mondo* 2000. *Mondo* is really a writers and artists' magazine that assumes that current reality appears as science-fiction to the average untrained brain. We offer a wisp of journalism but basically it's in the spirit of *Mad* magazine meets William S. Burroughs. As I said earlier, the book, *Mondo 2000, A User's Guide to the New Edge*, published by HarperCollins, is the overall guide to both the core substance and the social fads of this whole cyber "thing". In it, I tried to be as kind as possible and deal, in alphabetical order, with everything from "Artificial Life" to "Chaos Theory" to "Cyberpunk", "Hackers", "Longevity", "Industrial Music", etcetera. Even Raves (covered under the term "House Music") and "Smart Drugs" are included. We were reasonably upbeat about all of this, but now it's time to move on. Meanwhile, the book is very entertainingly written. So LOOK IT UP IN THE FUCKIN' BOOK!!!

Is there much substance to "Cyberpunk" and VR? In other words, at the current level of technology, how much VR is hype?

Ok, well the answer to your question to whether there's much substance to Cyberpunk is... Who gives a fuck about VR? I mean, cyberpunk is a world view, it's a fundamental description of the direction of Western civ. technology going wild, out of control. Transgressive attitudes as the de rigeur currency of Sony/Warner's Brothers multinational media saturated society... the society of the Simulacrum as a trendy French philosopher once said. I could say a lot more about cyberpunk but- A) like any other media label, it's all bullshit and b) READ THE BOOK... *Mondo 2000, A User's Guide to the New Edge.* Open up to the two sections, "Cyberpunk" and "Cyberpunk Science Fiction". It's got all you need to know. Seriously, I feel like my job is *done.* People can continue to ask me trivial questions about fads like infant level developments in Virtual Reality Technology or cognition and memory enhancement chemistry or raves, and most of the time I'll try to answer them sincerely, But, hey, this is *Ben is Dead*... so can I just say that I *really* don't *give* a fuck?

Is it true you plan to have plastic surgery performed on you during each performance.

We'll see what body mod we wind up doing.

Is Cyber Society, as in the "global village," more unified, intelligent, etc., than previous groupings of people?

I think of what Burroughs always answers to questions like that... "Be more specific." Economically, the world is "more unified." The unification of Europe, the bringing of the former socialist bloc into the capitalist economy, the complete multinationalism of capital, with money becoming electronic blips – bits and bytes in a data base zipping around the planet at the speed of light. A friend of mine who's in the middle of international banking and investing loves to rant not about the movement of capital from the U.S. to Germany and Japan, but how much action emanates from India, Pakistan and from small African and South East Asian countries. Unification isn't necessarily good. On the other hand, it isn't necessarily bad. SPEED AND COMPLEXITY! All we are saying is SPEED AND COMPLEXITY! Make your own judgements and decisions but don't have the illusion that we're advocating anything or saying isn't this wonderful. Please read more closely!

How does rapid access to information affect local communities?

Access to media, access to information, access to ideas has – across the entire 20th century – been part of a punk bohemian assault on family values and part of a greed-driven assault on "common decency." The image of the future was presented when Warner Brothers defended Ice T's "Cop Killer" against community values. They backed down, but that's where we're headed.

People used to live on the farm all their lives. Or in industrial communities. They adapted their families' belief systems pretty much verbatim, they got their information

As soon as they announce that skull implants are available, I'm gonna line up for mine. –Steve Jackson

> Access to media, access to information, access to ideas has -- across the entire 20th century -- been part of a punk bohemian assault on family values and part of a greed-driven assault on "common decency." The image of the future was presented when Warner Brothers defended Ice T's "Cop Killer" against community values. They backed down, but that's where we're headed.

from the local daily paper. Slowly but surely, the presentation of disturbing and subversive notions from outside to ordinary folks has increased... and increased and increased and increased. Now we're in a total apocalypse of identity and it's gonna keep getting wilder and wilder. 21st Century humans will have all of the information, all of the attitudes, all of the visions, coming from every possible experience in the human system from Hispanic Lesbian Bikers on Acid to pious Muslims Suffering Self-Inflicted Torture For Salvation available. The stuff will be preserved on wafer-thin silicon chips. You'll have black contact lenses that you implant behind your eyelids.

Ah, but now I'm talking about the future... Now it's just 57 channels and nothing on. The coming of electronic democracy without first instituting strong libertarian protections of the individual and without, in a sense, retraining these shits in the libertarian principle of knowing when something isn't any of their fucking business, is going to be disastrous. I mean, this whole talk-show-as-new-electonic-forum thing is scary, given the preponderence of bored housewives with nothing better to do than get all twitchy over different people's sexual preferences...

To some people the idea of making friends and communicating from behind a computer screen is unfathomable. Are people more or less social sitting behind their computers?

Neither, just differently social. I think people tend to be willing to say things "publicly" on the net that they won't say in a live public setting out of intuitive animal body fear of getting punched. I was being interviewed by Lisa Palak for *Future Sex* and she was disagreeing with me, saying that the conversation about sex on the WELL is really boring. But I pointed out that at most parties, the conversation is *much much* more boring, kind of, "Hi. How are ya? What have you been doing?" sort of stuff. I think sex is more interesting in person. Humans should only get together in the flesh for live sex, I think!

I guess it depends what kind of parties you go to.

Well, sure. In fact, when the live interaction is good, it's in some ways better than what you get online. I mean, I hate to reveal what a total sex driven hetero idiot I can be, but I'd like to live my life surrounded by beautiful women, not by computer screens and body suits. See, all of your questions seem to be based on comparisons, "Isn't this better that this, isn't this going to be worse" and, you know, though watching *Beverly Hills 90210* is better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick, most of these issues don't come down to anything that clearly one way or another... Everything at once!

What are your performance pieces with Mondo Vanilli about, and how do they reflect your work with *MONDO 2000*?

Well, Mondo Vanilli has done one "actual" performance and two "virtual" performances. The *actual* performance was abysmal, and we're very proud of that because people weren't talking much about Pathetic Art at the time. But we set it up with a video of Rex Bruce reviewing the "Pathetic!" performance as a kind of criticism from the future. We didn't show up for a couple of shows, also. That's our False Starts tour. Now we're preparing a series of actual performances, 'cause there's pressure to tour. They want us in LA, Chicago and New York, at the least. We have a song called "Hello. My Name is Excellent by Mondo Vanilli." which will promote a CD by the same name. It'll be sort of like an EST session as imagined by David Cronenberg and Mark Pauling with a live robot/woman sex act at its culmination.

The relationship to *MONDO 2000* is the name *Mondo*. That and the attitude. Because Mondo Vanilli is really an attempt to locate spontaneity amidst a highly complex, self-conscious, mass media, surveillance society. To do that you have to not give a shit from the position of a successful dadaist multimedia corporation. This is the *überplan* for WORLD DOMINATION...

Eventually I plan to have plastic surgery as part of a performance, but we'll see when and where...

Contact info: Mondo 2000, *P.O. Box 10171, Berkeley, CA 94709-0171. Subscriptions are $24 for 5 issues.*

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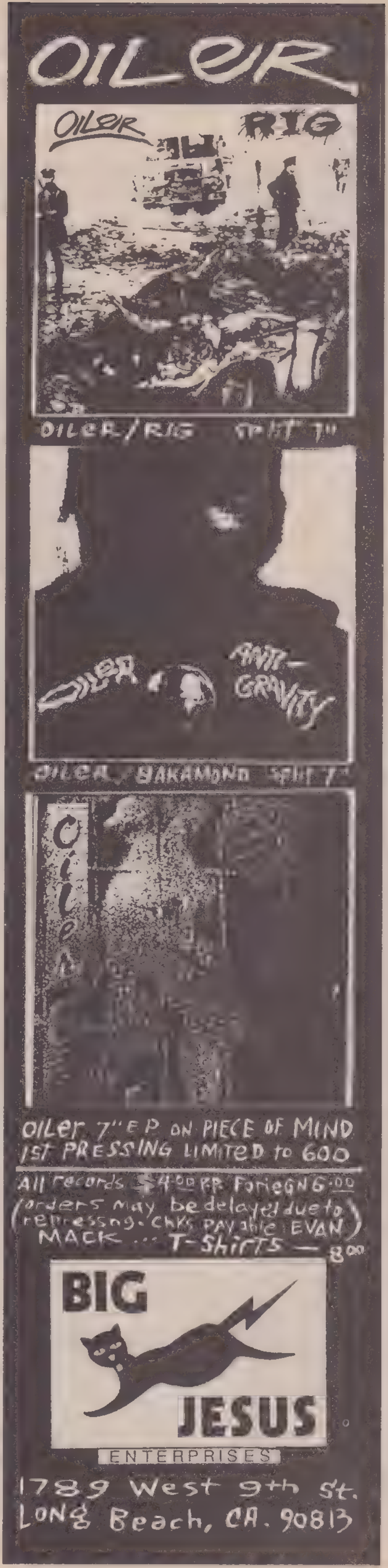

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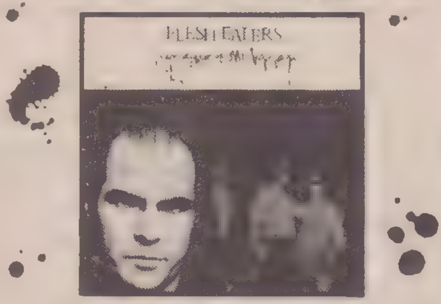
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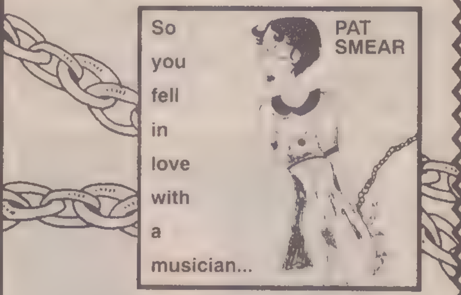
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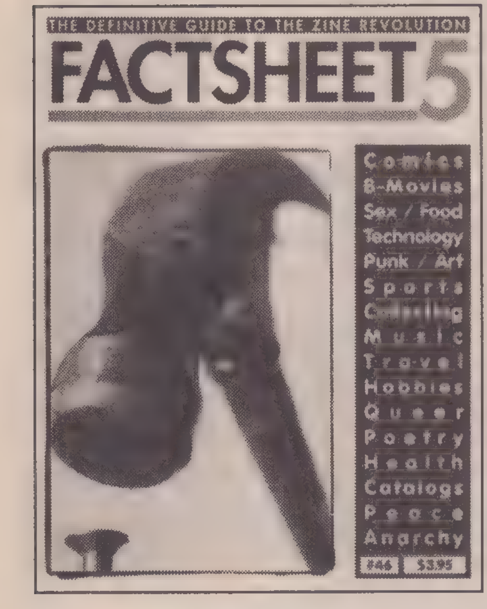
Is Factsheet Five Still It's Definitive Guide?



The zine community suffered a blow when editor of the "zine of zines" Mike Gunderloy called it quits and moved on to less demanding, less complicated things (anything wound be less demanding and less complicated). The creator and long-time mastermind of a magazine out of control he handed the reigns over to a man who had no idea what he was getting himself into. Though this man, Hudson Luce, probably had good intentions, he only delivered one issue in his year of running the publication (FF was bi-monthly). Then, after practically destroying the previously dependable magazine, he dropped the ball. Well, that ball's finally been picked up by a new victim, R. Seth Friedman, with a stronger grasp on the reality of the project (this guy's life is OVER!). Anyway, all we fans care about are the goods, and after cleaning up Hudson's mess, he and new fellow FFers have already presented us with the delivery of their first allotment. Since I am such a devoted Mike fan, and also considering the reviews in this first issue are old old old (they reviewed our BID issue #14, 1991!), I don't think it's fair for me to review the thing. Stingier than Mike on trades, zine publishers will have to subscribe or check the newstands. This magazine is more devoted to its readers anyway. –Darby

Darby: Do you mind if I tape-record this and do an interview with you?

Seth: No, that'd be great just hold on a second – let me switch phones. I've got about a thousand people working over here.

A thousand? Fuck, you people in San Francisco! I don't know how you get all these people to slave for you.

Yeah, Tim at *Maximum* does it, and me, yeah, it's a great city.

I need some kids with no direction.

You need to relocate to San Francisco. (switches phones) Well, I have a lot of friends here and they're all helping me.

Are you a computer nerd?

Uh, yeah.

You are? I guess that's the only way anything's going to get done around here.

Well, I think Mike and Hudson and myself have all been computer nerds. And actually most of the people... yeah, it's amazing. Jerod [Pore], who is also working on the electronic version of *Factsheet*, and Larry-Bob (editor of *Holy Tit Clamps*), who's doing the queer zine section, is a computer nerd.

I'd heard about the electronic version – that it's going to be available to people through the modem.

That's how the whole thing started. Jarred started the electronic version. Actually Hudson [Luce] and him were working on it simultaneously for a while. Then Hudson decided to stop altogether.

Hudson only put out one issue.

Yeah, issue #45.

I never saw it.

Oh, I just got copies of it today – a box full of these things. It's really bad.

The electronic version is on the Well, it's on-line and it's free. And ideally it's the same context of the [printed] magazine and vice versa. There's some problems with that because he gets some unsolicited reviews and I can't deal with unsolicited reviews right now.

And he'll put anything in.

Yeah, because it's very much like bulletin boards.

Anyone can post anything and then it gets distributed.

Right.

So when did you get caught up in this?

Oh, last year. August I started thinking about it, September I started getting heavily involved, and then by the beginning of October...

You wanted to kill yourself.

No, I didn't want to start killing myself 'til about a week ago.

Oh, you have patience.

A years worth of mail going to *Factsheet Five*. Now just imagine... getting hundreds of pieces of mail a *day*. Checks, money orders, cash, faxes... every single day. And then collect that stuff for a year and then ship it to one person, in one apartment, in one bunch. That's what I'm dealing with right now... checks that are too old – which is such a big job – probably close to a thousand checks have to be returned. We have to open it up, check it out, stick it in a different envelope, write an address on the envelope and stamp it.

So you ended up spending all this money mailing the mail back. Why are you mailing checks back and not just sending them the new issue?

The checks are no good, they're out-dated.

I don't know how Mike ever dealt with it anyway. Was Hudson basically working alone?

Yeah. He was working alone a lot more than I am. I've got a lot more people here.

I mean, it would be basically impossible to do what Michael was doing – I mean, unless you were... crazy.

Well, it was smaller then too, even though it's been out of print for a year...

It's grown?

It's grown. It's amazing. Its readership has *grown* in the time it hasn't been published.

Well, I guess you have a lot of people out there who are really searching for it. People got so comfortable getting each issue because it was so regular and now there's a lot of people thinking that Factsheet is dead and gone and that those were the good old days.

And the fact that it's coming back has people clamoring for it.

That was a good gimmick. Too bad it didn't work for Ross Perot.

That's right. That's very funny.

Is it purely magazines that you're reviewing now?

Yeah. Well, there's no room for music right now.

Are you the official address or is it a shared address?

There's two main addresses. There's my P.O. Box, which is basically for subscriptions and submissions and things like that. And then there's Jared's box and we both pick up mail at both locations. Jared's box is actually a manned station in the mail drop, so UPS stops there.

Jared and I are both the reviewers. As a matter of fact it's almost split 50/50 right now – with the reviews. We both have different stuff that we like. He's kinda into the more fringy types of things and more sci-fi, technology, computer things. And I'm really big on personal zines and music zines and things like that. So whatever comes in we kinda share. I take mail art. The poetry we're trying to farm out right now.

You better farm that shit out.

Yeah.

So tell me, why did Mike give the paper to Hudson in the first place?

The reason why Mike gave the paper to him is because Mike wanted to stop publishing it. I never asked Mike specifically why he gave it to Hudson but as I went over the subscription records, and after dealing with Hudson and Mike, I understand why Mike gave it to Hudson. At that time I would have also. Because Hudson seemed like a very good prospect... I don't think I'm a good prospect myself – I'm trying my best – and a lot of people have been giving me very good encouragement.

Did he have publishing experience or did he just give Michael a lot of money?

He had some professional experience but no zine experience, and I think he was a little more financially stable than I am – which is a serious problem that I'm running into right now. But I think I put together a good product. I'm working really hard on it, and it's going to look very nice.

So, explain your system.

Well, I had a feeling this magazine was going to get pretty elaborate so I designed a system. It took me longer to develop the system than to publish the magazine. The magazine is actually being developed on a computer database. So all the reviews and addresses are entered into a database instead of a word processing program.

I think that's how Flipside does their reviews too.

Really? So, from there I'm able to generate the postcard I sent you [prints a copy of the review of your magazine without sending you the issue itself], and I can also print mailing labels, and the same database holds the subscription database as well. I can also export the information into a format that's suitable for either a) the electronic version or b) the print version. And then the print version is done... I generate these tabs which are then used for the Pagemaker program to design text. So the magazine is so easy 'cause I just pump the stuff out from the database.

So it basically just scrolls and formats itself.

Exactly.

How many pages is this going to be?

This issue's coming out to be 96 pages – with a glossy slick cover with two colors.

Anything else important you'd like to include?

What was your theme again, communication?

Yes.

[Greta] Braddocks who does *Mudflop*, [a San Francisco-based zine] told me that she didn't like the fact that people say the "zine revolution" was encouraged by the revolution of the desktop

CONTINUED ON PAGE 122

All speech, written or spoken, is a dead language until it finds a willing and prepared hearer. –Rober Louis Stevenson

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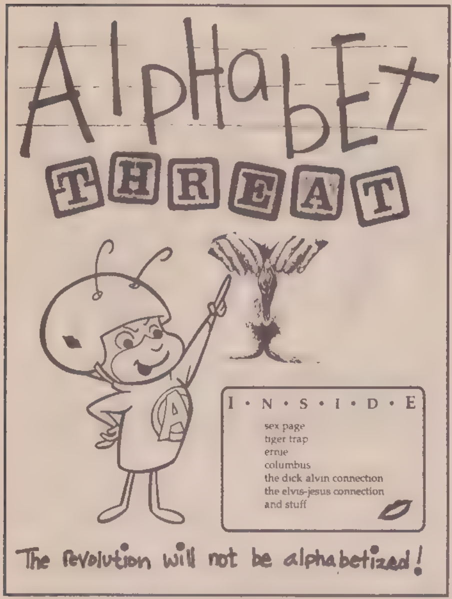
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and stuff
The Revolution will not be alphabetized!

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF, 29¢ (Kitty Kash [amount Ms. Lukemia might pay for said zine]: $1.50)
This sparsely decorated (save for the cover) zine hails from Seattle in a no-nonsense format with daisy-wheel print. The elements work for this offering of amoebic glimpses at other life forms beyond our own immediate realms, including a homeless Gary, "lotsa places" Diane, prisoner John, mixer Todd, and a commune Katie (proprietress of an L.A. bed & breakfast for bands). It is, refreshingly, void of that forced exporting of Northwest culture that we have been inundated with. A special bonus is the free personal ad offer (with an emphasis on "gothic" and "other vampire types"). The double bonus offer is the nice price of a postage stamp, although I think editor Carrie Carolin should hold out for the SASE. –Kitty Lu Kemia (P.O. Box 8124, Seattle, WA 98124)

ANARCHY, No. 34, 86 pgs., $2.50
As usual, pages upon pages of thought-provoking and informative articles. This issue's theme is "Crime and Criminalization" and includes articles on the current legal rights of prison inmates in the United States, the strong-arm criminalization of adult-child sex research, and another installment from Raoul Vaneigem entitled "Separation." –Shelby (C.A.L., P.O. Box 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446)

ATTITUDE PROBLEM, No. 12, 16 pgs., $2.50
The skater zine from Arizona with intelligent articles and opinions that go far beyond the usual non-constructive, narrow-minded rantings of many so-called "non-conformist" zines. I also love the way the newpaper format quickly and neatly folds for easy transport. The focus of this issue is racism, with articles covering the Native American, Nazi-skinhead, and Los Angeles quarters. –Shelby (P.O. Box 703, Clarkdale, AZ 86324)

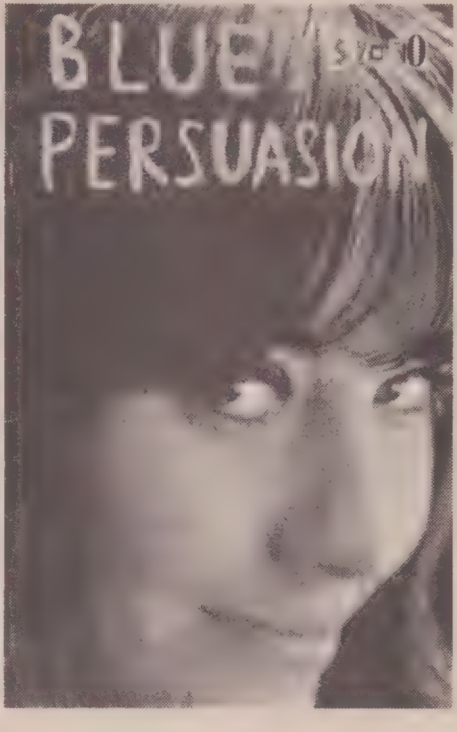
BICYCLE THREAT, No. 2, 30 pgs, Free though SASE probably appreciated. (KK: Worth the stoop and probably $2)
Bicycle Threat boldly wheels forward with a public broadcast of the letter "B" as a follow-up to Alphabet Threat ("the next issue will be ..."). It will probably be "Continual Threat". BT is a 'zine with practical bells and whistles printed in a tabloid, newsprint format. Despite the appropriation of children's television in unabashed alphabet climbing, any resemblance to Sesame Street ceases as BT strokes the first amendment with frank shorts on sex, a pat of politics and an in-depth feature story on bicycles. Advertising to this point has been replaced by the Unclassified exchange network, and is accompanied by a brief accounting summary that outlines expenditures and a sustenance derived from benefits and donations. –Kitty (3018 J Street, #140, Sacramento, CA 95816)

BLUE PERSUASION, No. 1, 40 pgs., $2.50. (KK: $3)
An enticingly odd persuasion, this 5x8 xerographic export from Kentucky serves up generous pieces of meaty Jerry Butler, Lisa Suckdog, and a smorgasboard appropriation of incredible art. Bonus: A Sajid personal love test from *16* Magazine. I only had four correct answers out of a possible 29 total, yet that shouldn't discourage you from determining if you have won and are on your way to Sajid's heart. A scathing review of L.A.'s *Answer Me* and the pathetic upper middle class white trash couple that produce it is included. –Kitty (c/o Aaron Lee, 603 East Main Street, #2, Lexington KY 40508)

BRAT ATTACK, No. 3, 52 pgs., $3
A highly entertaining "zine for leatherdykes and other bad girls" with a sense of humor. Titillating art and fiction left my ass well-whipped and begging for more. Inside this issue: an interview with comix star, Hot Head Paison; true tales of female-to-male transsexuals; and coverage of the Separatist and S/M Lesbian conventions (not in the same place, of course). –Shelby (P.O. Box 40754, SF, CA 94140-0754)

CAFFEINE, No. 1 & 2, 52 pgs., "Phree". (KK: Phine, I'll take it. Stay phree.)
Although free, this zine/magazine reminds one of an expensive cup of joe that reads like a coffee house and its occupants. These beans of advertiser-supported "poetryfictionartfriction" are cultivated in Woodland Hills and possess a distinct suburban aroma that wafts through the Southland via *Hispanic Hotline*, *Between the Dirt*, and around *Nine Inches on the Bus*. Whitened with Cremora-like content and sweetened with granules of overblown desk-top design, this blend of esoteric literature is not my drug of choice, but would probably read well if one is lounging on a velveteen sofa, or perhaps looking for a diversion at Starbucks. Publisher Rob Cohen's ideas are good and deserve the support. –Kitty (P.O. Box 2134, Woodland Hills, CA)

CHARETTE'S EYE VIEW, No. 3, 30 pgs, $2 (KK: $2)
Charette spins an intricate 8.5 x 11 web with fine threads of a small type, which she says was enlarged to enable her father to meet her xerographic gaze at politics and art. It is enlarged occasionally, allowing removal of the magnification reading glasses. This zine is a generous, well-layered application of dense, toner-burned images of her own art as well as reproduced material. Charette is "fuckin' broke" and sends a plea for subscribers to continue this effort of politoons and cartoonitics that seems worth a pledge. –Kitty (The address was unavailable at publication. If anyone can provide it, it would be appreciated.)



DOLL, No. 8, 32 pgs., $2.95
Possibley the last issue of this Guy Cowell-illustrated series about the ultimate sex toy which causes violence and mayhem whereever it surfaces. This time *Doll* goes underground and finds herself in the middle of a nest of gangbangers who, as always, fall under her spell and incite an uprising of LA riot proportions. Will this be the end? –Shelby (P.O. Box 4686, Auburn, CA 95604)

GLUT, $2
A great idea from the boys at *Jersey Beat*! A "singles only" zine that offers up do-it-yourself and do-it-right single-making tips from Ben Weasel (that hopefully young bandlets everywhere will heed before putting out even more shitty demos), plus pages and pages of nothing but EP and single reviews. –Shelby (418 Gregory Ave., Weehawken, NJ 07087)

Whenever I'm asked what kind of writing is the most lucrative, I have to say, ransom notes. - H.N. Swanson, Literary Agent

SPUNK, No's 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3, Free in L.A., Subs $40/17 issues (Kitty Kash: One *Advocate*, one *Edge*, one *Frontiers*)

As far as "fag rags" go, this one is a puzzler... 48 pages (plus cover) of ambiguity. Is it a zine? Is it a magazine? Described as toilet paper, it is a mutation of Charmin and Northern, a synthetically woven roll of affected irreverance, and just as tastefully adorned. While definitely a violation of publishing protocol–especially in graphic design–it is too calculated to be truly different from the rest. Although it stamps its spunky little feet proclaiming itself to be "alternative"– especially by printing "reader" letters of dubious origin – the ads and pictures do little to distinguish this masturbatory wipe from its WeHo counterparts. Among its more puzzling elements:

The List: What a valuable resource! Fan-fold it, insert it into the Filofax and you have a handy reference guide for name-dropping at the next party you attend. There may be more names in this than in the WeHo phone book, but probably far less significant. They're divided into innane columns by how much time the publishers deem they have left in the world. And, as Jeffrey Hilbert said to me during his "ten minutes left," it is a direct appropriation from *Thing*, a Chicago zine that *spunk* should "borrow" more from.

The Column: This is all the news that is unfit to print about beautiful "kweer boyz" in Los Angeles, written in a style that (despite their vascillating references) could only hope to compare to that of J.V. MacAuley, (and I'm not handing out Pulitzer consolation ribbons here, either). Among the club reviews is a mention of "fabulous nobodies" at Prague, (probably labeled because club patrons lacked *spunk's* "camera-ready art" requirements).

Despite this scented, two-ply brand of fluff, I wouldn't flush it just yet. For the str8-acting unenlightened from the suburbs, the third issue features an informative (although less-than-original and not well-written) article about "J. Edgar Homo".There is also a slightly amusing interview with Ken, the Doll; unfortunately it reinforces every *contemporary* pseudo-masculine stereotype of what a fag should be in Los Angeles and West Hollywood.

If you want to know what is happening in Los Angeles, and can read beyond the badly written innuendos, and behind the blatantly self-promotional ego of the publisher and/or editor, then I would recommend this magazine. Personally, however, I think you would rather have a copy of the zine *Carrie* "shoved in your face." And, to quote *Carrie* publisher, Jackie Beat, "You can print that in your Planet Spunk!" –Kitty Lu Kemia/ Michael Carr (3278 Wilshire Blvd., #804, Los Angeles CA 90010-1430)

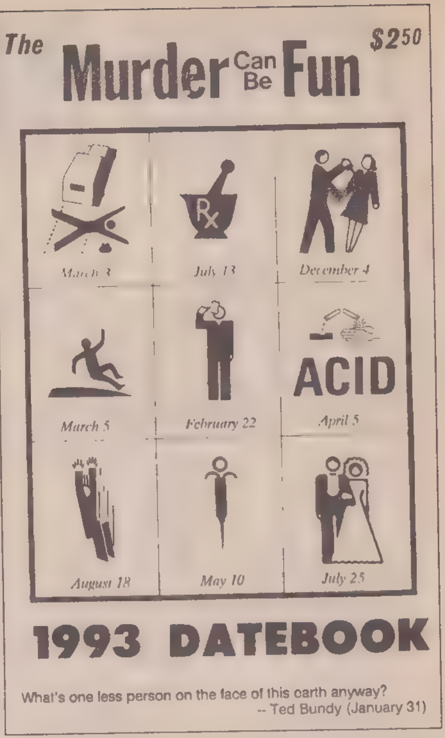
HEAT SEEKER, No. 9, 40 pgs, $Vague. Either 40¢ if you read Heat Seeker, or two "wicked, exploitive" dollars if you read MRR. (KK: See MRR price.)
Heat Seeker probes the erroneous zone with 100% poetry-free issue number nine, which features a "stupid" introduction and 23% lies. A "stupid" story, a responsibility claim for Medford, Oregon diarrhea and a PC liturgy of divine contradictions are among these xerographic seeds of attempted witticism, punk rock and blatant lies. –Kitty (Lizard, 45 Aliza Street, #5, Ashland, OR 97520)

JERK, No. 5, 20 pgs., 29¢, (KK: $1)
Ten years ago, long before ninetysomething-cent stores and fast food wars, Der Weinerschnitzel abandoned their Chalet style restaurants for low-slung modern blandness and transformed an older site into the 39¢ Hamburger Stand. Reminiscent of these important revolutions in our times is *Jerk*, a 2 3/4 x 4 1/4 handful of 29¢ entertainment that is published whenever Steve and David feel like it. Learn how to successfully refuse an NAACO West Resort invitation, and read one-on-one live machine recordings of responses to a real-life fake personal ad. I cried after reading the prayers lifted from the bulletin board of a christian book store. –Kitty (I did not have the address at publication. If someone has it, *please, please* send it to me.)

LOVING ALTERNATIVES, No. 15, 56 pgs., $5
A slick contact guide for swingers with pages of ads from virgin to well-seasoned couples looking for a good time. Includes top-notch adult video reviews, information on swinging organizations and social activities, and much more. The San Dimas address for this magazine gives me a new-found respect for the behind-closed-door antics of this bedroom community I have to call home. Stella and Mark from Beaverton, you'll be hearing from me soon. –Shelby (P.O. Box 459, San Dimas, CA 91773)

THE "MURDER CAN BE FUN" 1993 DATEBOOK, 53 pgs., $2.50
The zine of the same name spawns another edition of the desk calendar no one who has a desk job should be without. The latest version has 17 (count 'em - 17!) different categories of nasty happenings that are sure to add a little sunshine to each (otherwise humdrum) workday of the year. From murder and train wrecks, to riots and air crashes, there's something for everyone in the family, even Grandma. –Shelby (P.O. Box 640111, S.F., CA 94109)

ND, No. 16, 62 pgs., $4 pp.
A zine that is dedicated to the documentation and provision of a forum for the "contact and exchange" of information between like-minded beings. Intelligent and well-written, it contains extensive reviews of publications and audio and video material. This issue also includes a section on mail art, interviews with John Watermann, Crash Worship, Kadmon and much more. –Shelby (P.O. Box 4144, Austin, TX 78765)


The Murder Can Be Fun $2.50

1993 DATEBOOK

What's one less person on the face of this earth anyway?
-- Ted Bundy (January 31)

PUBLIK ENEMA, No. 3, 12 pgs., $1
Fear of Big Brother and political attitudes abound in this newspaper format zine whose cut-and-paste, mush-mash layout makes for difficult reading, to say the least. Possible high points for all parties interested include the *de rigeur* section on the L.A. "riots" and an article denouncing PETA. And press coverage in *Ben Is Dead* is worth more than a $1.50, sweetheart. –Shelby (P.O. Box 4472, Long Beach, CA 90804-0472)

SPOT THE BEAR, No. 3, 20 pgs., $3
Full of obscure British humor with, um, interesting graphics in a Monty Pythonesque vein. Issue No. 3 takes the easy way out and decides it's better to slander the dead (Elvis, Benny Hill) and those people whose fans are "really stupid" (Cliff Richards) than get sued for all the money they don't have by some snot-nosed tartlet who can't take a joke. If you like that memorable flick "The Magical Mystery Tour", you'll love this zine. –Shelby (25, Arnesby Crescent, Leicester, LE2 6QZ, U.K.)

TEN THINGS JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW, No. 2, 18 pgs., $1.52
A new zine out of the Northwest that attempts to inject a little more integrity into the Seattle scene. Interviews with local bands complement a large number of music and show reviews. *10 Things* is County Chocula full of a fresh, crunchy, non-corporate attitude that's not looking to go glossy anytime soon. –Shelby (1407 NE 45th St., #17, Seattle, WA 98105)

WHITE BREAD ZINE, No. 9, 22 pgs., $?
A little photocopy-and-staple number from NJ all done by one guy. There's a jam-packed layout with some funny comix ripoffs, a poetry page (I hate poetry pages - they're so fucking pretentious), and a few music reviews. It does "have its moments", but overall I found it to be kind of boring and too self-indulgent (enough with those lists of shit that nobody cares about). On the scale-o-meter I just invented, I rate it a good "wouldn't say no if I were stranded on the toilet" read. Pass me a fresh roll. Thanks –Shelby (3733 Sooy Place Rd., Vincetown, NJ 08088)

Never argue with people who buy ink by the gallon. - Tommy Lasorda

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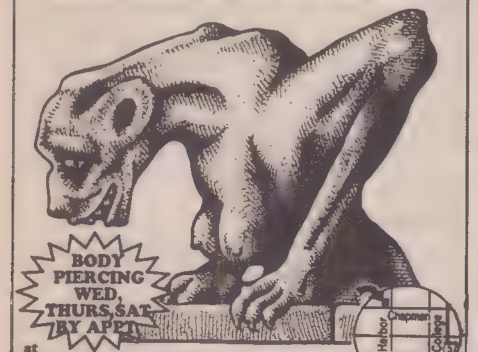

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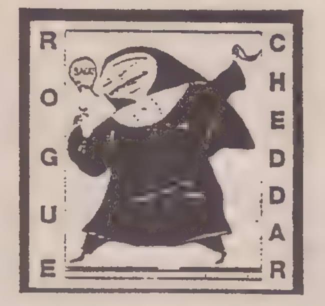

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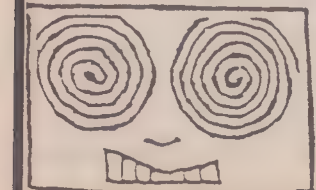

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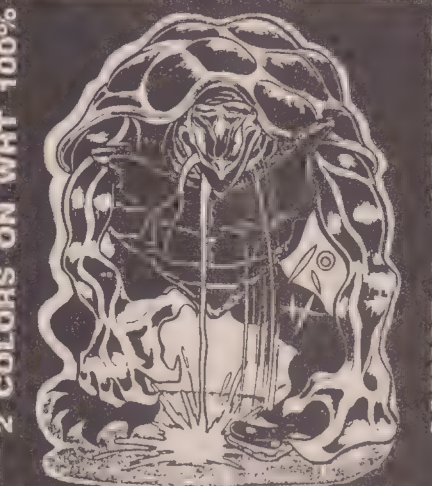

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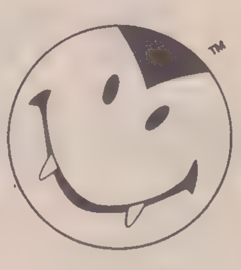

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MICHAEL CARR INTRODUCES US TO

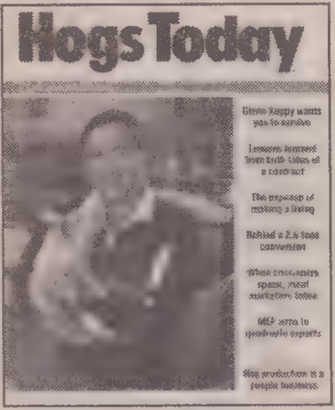
The Twisted World of Special Interest Publications

NEW ERA MAGAZINE
JANUARY 1993

While researching material for another article one evening at the Central Library in downtown Los Angeles, I noticed the *Guide to Periodicals* on the shelf behind the reference desk. The clerk scrutinized my license before straining to retrieve the first volume. "You are allowed to take only one at a time." This three-volume set catalogs over 17,000 publications in print across the United States, which I was only able to skim in the two hours I was at the library.

We are bombarded with print every day: billboards, flyers, proposals, reports, manuals, newsletters, newspapers, bulletins, and last, but not least, magazines. It is important to be selective about what we read. Most mainstream publications do not address the specialized needs and interests of the individual in our culture. The following are reviews of the few magazines I received out of the many I contacted for my 'school research project'.

Hogs Today



"The Magazine of American Pork Producers" is the subtitle describing this publication. As *producers*, the lives of many of the subscription base are devoted to raising pigs for human consumption. Mass consumption. Eating. Pork producers exist for the creation of the perfect pig: plump, disease-free, and actively breeding. It is the science of biogenics, pharmaceutical style - engineering with synthesized hormones to ensure that you never eat an unfresh piece of "pork", (the term used to comfort the consumer). The inside cover is an advertisement for Mecadox®, which uses a computer-generated image of a pig shown on a screen as a testament to its attributes in "building the better pig": early development; genetics and nutrition.

The term "breed-sow" gained new meaning in the editor's column of the December, 1992 issue. Using seedstock from The Pig Improvement Company, (PIC), an independent English farmer and the Bichton College of Agriculture achieved a production rate of 26.4 pigs per sow the prior year. The "world market leader" PIC invests heavily in future breeding technology including a concept known as transgenesis. (Whatever that may mean.) PIC technical director Hein van der Steen predicts 30 pigs per sow by the year 2012.

A column on marketing features a man who installed a satellite market news system (DTN) "to enhance his hog-marketing capabilities." Another column focuses on an ambitious program by two executives from the U.S. Meat Export Federation (MEF) to increase exports from just over $400 million to $1.8 billion. They don suits and run around the world spewing market-speak about the benefits of American "product" to create a "critical mass" of buyers in foreign markets. Forget chicken chunks... since the opening of their Missouri swine packing plant, Tyson pork rolls in China is more than just a possibility.

New Era

This esoteric title alludes, of course, to the latest news in the entrepreneurial world of laundry and drycleaning. Based in Huntington Beach, California, this magazine is oddly ego-driven, resplendent with black and white photos of prominent figures in the industry. Company logos are incorporated into the titles of the columns written by contributors, whose pictures are also featured in ads for consulting seminars and books that promote them as "renowned authorities on drycleaning." In a column entitled "Hindsight", Brooklyn Harris (also of Huntington Beach) details the difficulty of working with man-made fibers, particularly rayon. If not treated properly it can give off a "fish-like odor, especially if warm and moist." He also questions the ethics of profit-driven textile manufacturers and their disservice to the public for financial gain, yet shamelessly promotes his book in the closing paragraph. I don't get it.

Paraplegia News

The title for this magazine, published in Irvine, California, is much more literal than *New Era*. It does, however, offer much more than just news. Stories and advice about every aspect of living as a paraplegic are included in these pages: estate planning; legislation; sports and recreation; travel; and extensive advertising for products and services catering exclusively to paraplegics.

The December, 1992 issue includes a full feature of the Paralympic Games (named as such after the merciless attack by the organizers of the Olympic Games™). Later issues detail the new Disabilities Act, and the employment programs available. Although many would probably question the sincerety of a corporation like McDonald's (especially after the company named its program "McJobs") their efforts are probably admirable as long as they pay more than their usual 'McSalaries'. P.N. readers not inclined toward 'burger-flipping' and/or any administration of it, may investigate the temporary employment program established by Goodwill Industries.

A sense of humor is retained in these pages as well. Richard K. Miller, a reader and incomplete-quad-type from El Cajon, California, was "tired of... what the disabled community should be calling itself" and wrote to express a strong preference for the word "gimp". This was accompanied by a list of terminology, including: gimpspot - to describe a handicapped parking space; gimpmobile - a car or van with handicap driving aids; and gimpology - the study of facets associated with a disabled lifestyle.

FF5 CONTINUED FROM PG. 116

publishing system. She thinks the most revolutionary tool in zine publishing is the Sharpie pen. And that really shows exactly what a zine is, because a zine doesn't have to be desktop publishing. A zine can be anything, and you can hand-draw the entire thing, which she does, and her zine is great.

What do you think about what they call the "zine revolution" anyway? What do you think about all the press it's been getting?

Uh, maybe it's the flavor of the month. Or maybe it'll be like rap music and it'll stick around for awhile. I think a lot of the "zine revolution" is caused by several things, one of which is the recession. A lot of people have become unemployed and they always wanted to do something like start a zine and so they do.

Also, thinking more about the small press. *Utne Reader* is a good example. They started out kinda addressing the small press and now they're mainstream. But they're almost still addressing the same issues. They have changed somewhat. But the fact that they're so "mainstream" and yet they're addressing the small press is pretty revolutionary. I think people are just more open to what could be considered the small press now. People are becoming more progressive thinking. Clinton was elected and I think there's a reason. I think people are fed up with the status quo.

What do you think the attitudes are behind zines? I find a lot of people are more left-standing individuals. What are your feelings about that?

Oh absolutely. It's phenomenal. I have sections for peace, ecology, leftists, anarchy, and one for Libertarians. And anything that comes in that's Conservative or Republican goes in miscellaneous because there are not enough to make a category just for Conservatives. And there's one or two reasons for that, A) There are less zines from the conservative standpoint being made or B) Mike Gunderloy as a publisher didn't encourage people who were Republicans or Conservatives to send him material. I don't know the answer to that. I have a difficult time understanding conservative material so a lot of the time I kind of lump it in with fanatical religious stuff. But then again, a more conservative person might have trouble telling the difference between a Libertarian and Anarchist. So it's hard for me to encourage Conservatives but I want to encourage all people. I'd love to have a section for Republican zines.

Do you have any limits on what zines you review?

Yes. I review anything that gets sent to me with a distribution/circulation of less than 100,000. I might review stuff with over 100,000 with my discretion. For example, I'm not reviewing *Mother Jones*. I think it's a great magazine but they print about 150,000.

I wanted to bring up separating the magazine into categories. When Mike started doing that there was sort of a backlash.

We're going to have 30 categories.

Is that so you can be better organized or because you think that's the best way for people to find the information?

I want people who publish zines to have an audience. I want them to have readers. And the best way of doing that is by making *Factsheet Five* as user-friendly as possible. I put an index in the back of the magazine so that anyone who was looking for a specific zine won't have to wonder what category it is under.

That's good. I could never even find my own magazine when Mike reviewed it. I was always wondering, "What kind of magazine are we?" We were always a music zine no matter what, and the reason why it sorta bothered me – and maybe why it bothered other people – is because they hate being stuck in a category because they do so much more.

People will be upset being put in a category but on the other hand, when I read *Factsheet Five*, I liked to be able to find specific zines.

For information on Factsheet Five write P.O. Box 170099, SF, CA 94117-0099. Subscriptions are available: bulk mail: $4 - samples, $20.00 - 6 issue subscription, and "F5.Friend"/first class: $6 - samples, $40 - 6 issue sub. The email address for Factsheet Five - Electric is jerod23@well.sf.ca.us. Call (415)332-4335 for information on the WELL bbs.

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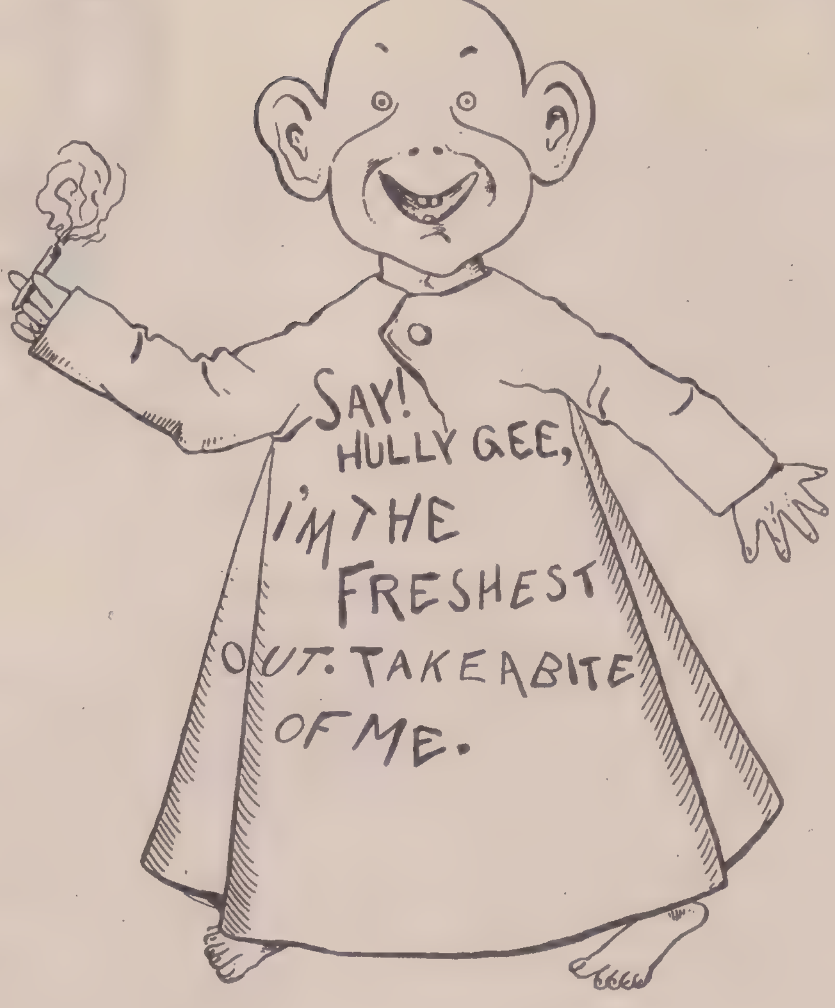
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New from AMOK Books — *Howard Street* by Nathan C. Heard. "*Howard Street* is the heart of the jungle: a street of doomed (but vivid and defiant) souls—whores, junkies, pushers, winos, thieves, corrupt cops—in the smoldering ghetto of Newark. Mr. Heard tells it like it is. With no trace of condescension, without irony or sentimentality, with honesty and objectivity, he spins a raw and powerful story of ghetto life. Everybody in this story is a loser, but each of Mr. Heard's fully realized characters is individual and distinct." — *Publishers Weekly*

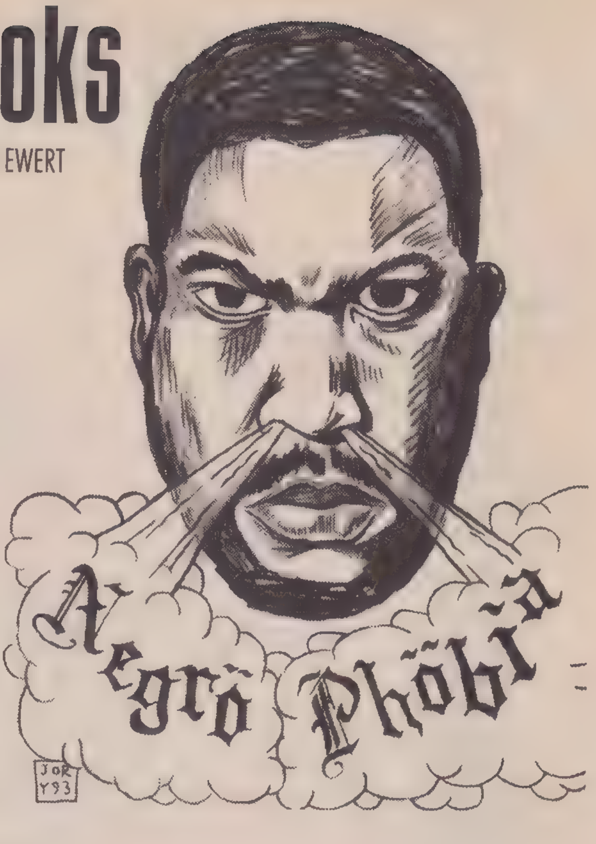
SPEECH:

Considering our sensorium to be limited to the information flowing into us through our physically-based inlets is a rather old-world idea. Language comprehension has aspects that are sense-like, albeit senses of the mind rather than the body. The sense of **meaning, semantics**, is the tickle of **import** we experience when we hear human words, including our inner voice. Hearing a knock on the door as "shave and a haircut, two bits," results from our sense of **onomatopoeia**, the making into words of the ambient sounds of nature. Any repetitive, continuous, modulated sound can be sensed as linguistic, especially if the volume, range, and overall texture is within the range of human speech. Medieval instrument makers made several **"vox humana"** (human voice) oboes, and the viola was designed to play in the range of human speech. Even nonsense or repetitive phrases can stimulate our linguistic sense. **John Lilly**, in a famous experiment, played a tape loop to experimental subjects containing only some repetitive phrase like "I buried Paul." Within five minutes, all participants began to hear other words on the tape. This form of **aural hallucination** is a **brain phenomena** involving the mismatching of **morphemes**, the sound bits of language. When arranged into languages we cannot understand, these same morphemes can be extremely grating. Greeks called foreigners **barbarians**, the repetition of the cluster "bar" being thought by many authorities to represent dogs barking. Of course, only English dogs bow-wow. Spanish dogs guau-guau. Spanish chicks don't peep, they pio-pio. Cockle-doodle do is cocoroco in El Salvador (according to Kerin, BID Staff Zoologist), and kikiriki in Colombia. Go figure. The Chinese utilize a **tone language** system that allows for a **song-like** variation to enter the equation. What we would consider meaningless and weird variations in intonation, "spells" the difference for them between one word and another. The Ancient Greeks also utilized tones — their speech was quite musical. This tendency to musicalize speech has been in decline in the West as language has become more and more **mentalized** along with all the phenomena of the world. We are enslaved to hearing only "our" voice in our "mind." The development of this restrictive **mental voice** is recent. Ancients identified many of the voices they "heard," often in their chests, as spirits or demons. Nor did they know how to read silently. Saint Augustine reports silent reading as a miracle. Prior to that, reading was like speaking—out-loud. Ancient people wouldn't listen to you if your words felt strange to them. The ideas were, in a way, secondary to the effect on the listener. It wasn't "I don't like what you say," but "I don't like how I feel when you talk." Your inner state was "heard" in your speech. Moderns, on the other hand, have refined their senses to the degree that they ignore most variations in their mental voices, and know or care nothing about what that voice reveals about their insides. The inner voice (and the outer world) is now **monotonal**. Bombarded by external media, it is reduced to half-thoughts and grunts. One of the values in reading is to develop that voice, even to broaden our internal monologue to the two or more voices needed for dialogue. We live in a culture where people think it is weird if you enjoy talking to yourself.

—Paul Iannone

Books

BY MARK EWERT



NEGROPHOBIA

DARIUS JAMES, CITADEL PRESS

Black author Darius James slings shit through the sterile halls in the kingdom of the politically correct, that land which, weirdly enough, so often starts to smell and feel like conservative Orange County, the values of which the PC are so desperately fleeing. The fierce *ca-ca* Darius flings is from that collection we all have impacted like granite in our bowels, no matter how white liberal or black radical our upbringing - negrophobic imagery. And if you think your guts are so clean, I dare you to read *Negrophobia*, the only book I know where "hilarious" becomes "harrowing" the second you catch yourself laughing. This is because the joke-butts here (indeed, the only characters) are every last balloon-lipped, glow-in-the-dark-eyed, missionary-cooking, OOGA BOOGA-grunting, stupid, superstitious, violent African that ever stalked his or her own footprints in a WHITE Looney Tunes cartoon. And the wickedly funny James is determined to wring a laugh from you if it kills you: he makes sure the song-and-dance each Stepin Fetchit and Aunt Jemima *must* execute while on stage is a pressure-cooked masterpiece of comic timing, satiric precision, and over-the-top absurdity. (The guy has the best imagination since Hieronymous Bosch.) So what are you laughing at: the endless dark buffoons (YES), or (you hope desperately) at the insanity of the white mind that created these images in the first place? Just when some politically correct proof that you're no racist, nor self-hating black, would really come in handy, Darius sticks the enema tube still further up your butt. And do you really think it's *his* job to shine your shoes after the (heh, heh) dams burst? As those signs in grade school used to say: Your Mother Does Not Work Here; Clean Up Your *Own* (Stinking) Mess.

Well now I've made *Negrophobia* sound like cod liver oil, but it's really Super Mario Brothers meets George Clinton meets William Burroughs. Don't you get the feeling with most working authors that they haven't licked the planet's air since at least the invention of television? Let me assure you that with plot-twists here like all the cut-away tissue from Michael Jackson's once-negroid nose being used as a D.N.A. source by the "Zombie Master" to bring back from extinction the entire black race, and to simultaneously blow up Sleeping Beauty's Castle, H.Q. of the fascist, all-America-governing Disneyland of the future, the bore-factor is ZERO. *Negrophobia* is fresh and outrageous, and *deadly* important. Exposed here are the real secret beats that you and the whole nation jump to, from time out of mind. James Joyce once said, "History is a nightmare from which I'm trying to awaken," to which Darius' "voodoo terrorist" maid responds, "Kee! Kee! Kee!!!"

No man would listen to you talk if he didn't know it was his turn next. –Ed Howe

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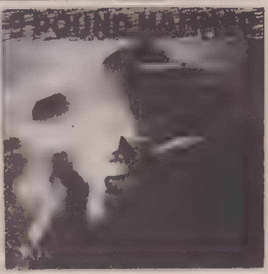

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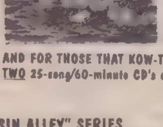

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Sex, Gross, Broke, and Disinformation issues sold out & available on photocopy only, $6.

#19 – THE RIOT/THEMELESS ISSUE (JUN/JULY '92) Strict subscription to a non-unifying principle. Articles: Dubin on the Uprising, Refuse and Resist, King for a Day, Click! Media Wars Hit Home, The KROQ Agenda, the Angry Minority, Curtis York on Multiculturism, also mock-LA Weekly style day-by-day of the riots, "Shooting Sparks, Too." Plus everyone's favorite: Why is My Dad Voting for Ross Perot!? Interviews with Cop Shoot Cop, Bigdamncrazyweight, Torture Chorus. And many more pertinent nonsequiturs.

#18 – THE GLAMOUR ISSUE (MAR/APR '92) Style is God. Articles: Beauty Tips for Junkies, Being Beautiful in the New World Order, Beauty in Death, A Connoisseur's Guide to The Perfect Car Crash, The Five Most Glamorous People I Know. Interviews with Fernando Martinez (trendy Westside beautician), Glue, Goddess Bunny. Part II of Sound and Technology.

#16/17 – THE GROSS [Double] ISSUE (DEC/JAN '91/'92) Yuck, in detail. Gross articles: Inside Scoop on Dead Animal Pick-Up, Salvadorean Stories, Animal Sex, Mouth Cheeze, Gross Movies, Interviews with "Gross?" Performance Artists (Annie Sprinkle, Joe Coleman, Lisa Suckdog, Curtis York, Bob Flanagan and more), Mike Diana, Fearless Leader, The Mudwimmin. Many short stories. Also a Visitor's Guide to Phoenix and a Sound and Technology section.

#15 – THE REVENGE ISSUE (OCT/NOV '91) Getting even - the how-to of glorious payback. With special "Revenge Tips" throughout. Article on "The Power of Revenge". Interviews w/ Nation of Ulysses (not just another cute boy band), Blister, Hole, Church of War. Loads of reviews. Cover by Evan "Oiler" Mack.

#14 – DISINFORMATION ISSUE (JULY '91) Truth about carrots, articles on media manipulation, drug propoganda, health myths. Interviews w/ Lewis Wulf of Covert Action Information Bulletin, Craig Lee (late musician/music writer for the L.A. Weekly & L.A. Times), the BBS Offworld founder. Also show & record reviews and a satiric montage of quotes critiquing the LA Desert Storm Parade. And lots more.

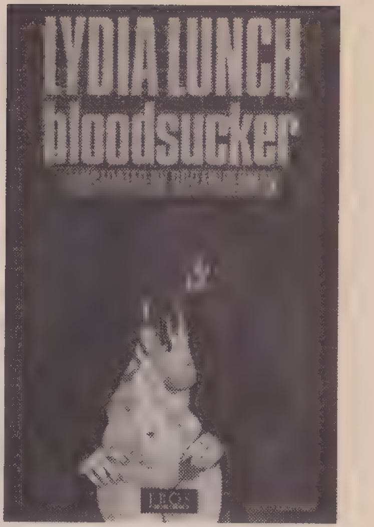
#13 – THE BROKE ISSUE (MAY '91) Contains the "Encyclopedia of Broke" - an A -Z on how to get things for free/cheap. Interviews with Citizen Fish, NoMeansNo, Independent Project, John of Sympathy and Lee Joseph & Zebra of Dionysus on "How to Run a Record Label Without Going Broke" (including a contact list). Staff crossfire on the ethics of scamming. Cover art Justin Forbes.

Other issues: #12 (4/91) "Censorship Issue" AMOK, KXLU, interviews w/ writers/publishers; #11 (12/90) "Obsessions & Bad Habits" SOLD OUT; #10 (7/90) "The Mother Issue" Mummies, Young Gods, Crash Worship, Ethyl Meatplow, SOLD OUT; #9 (4/90) HIV does not cause Aids, Suckdog revisited, cover by Marcel DeJure; #8 (12/89) Homocore, Distorted Pony, cover by Rojer Mejia; #7 (10/89) Green Jello, Rhythm Collision, Cringer; #6 (9/89) Anarchy Fest, No Pay To Play Manifesto, loads of interviews, cover by Kalynn Campbell; #5 (6/89) "Animal Rights," Steel Pole Bath Tub. Still raw.; #4 (4/89) Bulimia Banquet, Chemical People. SOLD OUT; #3 (2/89) Skinheads, Warworld, George Eats Cheap. Raw.; #2 (11/89) Sandy Duncan's Eye, Bad Religion. SOLD OUT; #1 (10/89) Painfully raw. SOLD OUT.

Back issues are available for $4.00 ea. $20 for 6 issues (bulk mail – 2-6 weeks) and $30 for a first class sub. Canada 1st class sub $35, Europe and elsewhere $45. Send well concealed cash, check or money order to: Ben Is Dead, P.O.Box 3166, Hollywood, CA 90028. Send 29¢ for a catalog. Broke t-shirts – $10 (white or grey), 90028 t-shirts – $15 (white on black), and Sex Shirts – $15 (white on black) all available. Specify L or XL.

Comics!

BY MICHELLE ANDERSON



BLOOD SUCKER

by Lydia Lunch
Illustrated by Bob Fingerman
Eros Comix

"With the blood of a thousand Christs, I wash my hands of mercy" is a line from "Necropolis of Unearthy Delights", the second part of Lunch's work in *Blood Sucker*. It is a good example of the excesses Lunch will go through to get her point across. Lunch calls herself a "confrontationalist" and goes to extremes as much in the vivid verbal imagery in this medium as in others she has worded with. She begins this work with a story of a pubescent female who develops a taste for blood at the same time as first losing her own. She robs men of their blood repeatedly and her actions escalate until she becomes utterly insatiable. In her writing, Lunch makes a strong case for the inexorable pull and fascination that some experience from bloodlust, and delves into the mysterious connection between women and menstruation. Hmm… The accompanying panels, done in black and white by Bob Fingerman, are stark and unattractive. They fail to convey the subtle mystery that her bloodlust might imply. However, they are effective in conveying a graphic picture of the violence and energy of Lydia Lunch's psyche.

WHITE TRASH

by Gordon Rennie and Martin Emond
Tundra

A first-person narrative by Dean, who bears too close a resemblance to Axl Rose to be coincidental, tells about how he meets King, the self-alleged king of rock and roll. Is he really Elvis come back to life? Dean is a white trash trailer-park refugee hitchhiking his way to LA to become famous like Axl Rose and King is his savior, the craziest motherfucking white american fascist ever to knock off a Big Red Dog franchise. The two become notorious for their exploits, bringing in all types of american trash: FBI, bikers, tourists, hicks, and more. Fucking great! The best part of this is the glossy color artwork which gives it a circus-like appeal. The portrayal of white trash road trip culture is done with a neurotic attention to detail, a loose style, and proper comic exaggeration. This is the first volume in a series I hope to see more of. Just seeing the Dean centerfold should make any rock chick fall in love. He's such a man!

LAZARUS IN THE VIRTUAL KISS CHURCHYARD

by Warren Ellis and D'Israeli
Tundra

You gotta love Lazarus from the start when he laments "Nobody kisses me anymore." Warren Ellis and D'Israeli have created an English cyberpunk-in-hell nightmare with Lazarus Churchyard. Lazarus (oh, the symbolism abounds) has been grafted to 'intelligent plastic' and is unable to die even though this is his greatest wish. His plasticity enables him to turn into a one-man killing machine, which he does not object to. Lazarus' trouble begins when he meets the evil Jim of ISES-ELEK who offers him his dream come true – death – in exchange for services rendered. The character of Jim is great as a futuristic experiment gone wrong. When asked "Shit, are you really laminated?" Jim responds "Sure, the frostygirls in London go crazy for dead men." If that's not a fashion trend… The creativity and originality put into the design and conception are enough in themselves. Lazarus' paranoid hell has the added elements of psychedelia to elevate it above your basic cyber story. And Lazarus is not the typical cyberpunk android; he is the eternally hip, drug-addled scenester, a Paul Barker look-a-like, even. Done in full vivid color glossy pages, visually, it's even more entertaining than the story. The artwork is loose, drug-induced perhaps. It gives more of a feeling of being on a bad trip than being in virtual reality.

OTHER RECOMMENDED READING:

FREAKS by Jim Woodring and F. Solano Lopez. An adaptation of the Tod Browning film, on Monster Comics.
HATE by Peter Bagge on Fantagraphics. A must-read.
KID ETERNITY by Grant Morrison and Duncan Fegredo on DC. Part of their "adult comics" series. Dynamically drawn and colored.
BIRDLAND by Gilbert Hernandez on Eros Comix. Good sex.
BEAUTIFUL STORIES FOR UGLY CHILDREN by Dave Louapre and Dan Sweetman on Piranha Press.

It's all storeytelling. you know. That's what journalism is all about. –Tom Brokaw

The Sparkley Jewel

Written by Carla Bozulich
Illustrated by Dame Darcy

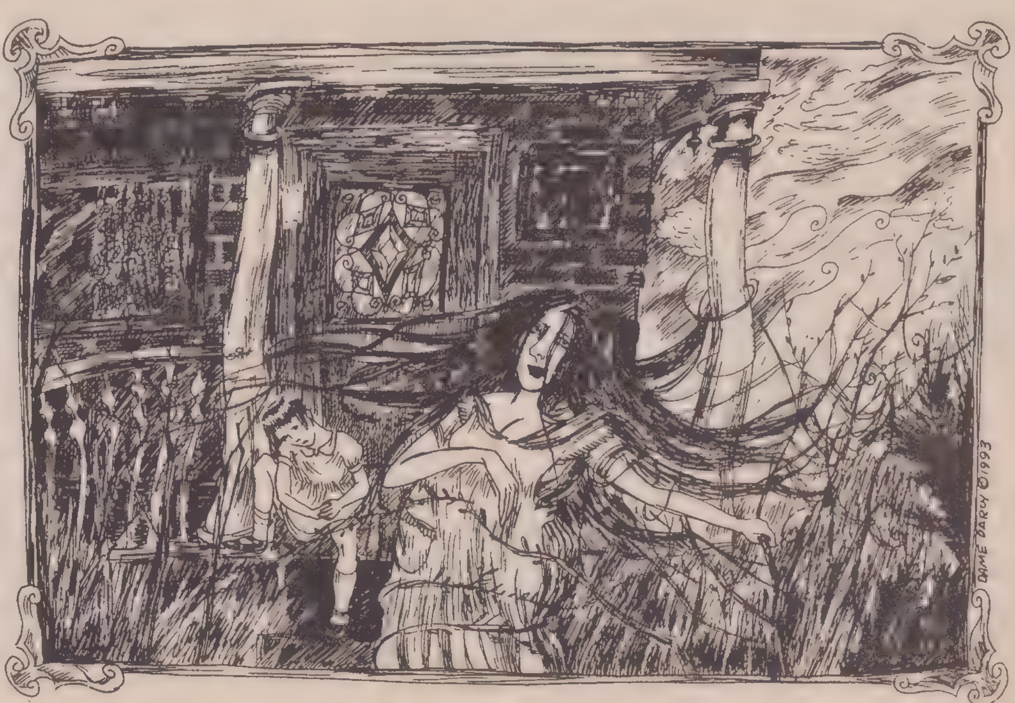
On the eve of the birth
of my guttersnipe love
I emptied my hands up
inside her
The bloody egg-whites
and the broken tea cup
seemed to mention that death
was upon her
So I kissed her torn lips
and eyes 'til they closed
and I pulled
like the devil himself

They took me away for her murder. The child I birthed was a boy. I can hear the sound of his first scream even still. It was octaves higher than any other cry ever. It was unnatural and perfect. It was superhuman. Three nights and two days, his cries were relentless. They demanded every thread of my body and thought.

My little love wrapped in swaddling clothes, your cries are so strange. They engulf me… I moved about, in a kind of dream tending his needs, and surrendered to what had now become a pure and deafening tone… a tiny gasp and then again, and on and on…'til they took me from him.

I remember very little that happened before I was eight years old. I was without family. At that time the woman I killed had taken me in out of kindness. I did my share of work. She was pregnant and didn't have a man, so she needed someone. She needed me. As the days passed, she became less rational and could almost always be found crouched on the windy stoop, rocking on her haunches. The scene became more and more peculiar. Her hair, her breasts, the garden and her swollen womb were all growing out of control and after a time seemed hopelessly tangled, like the leashes of a bunch of dogs meeting in her yard to fight.

She began to tell me things. She told about her father, the trim violinist. Her mother, the



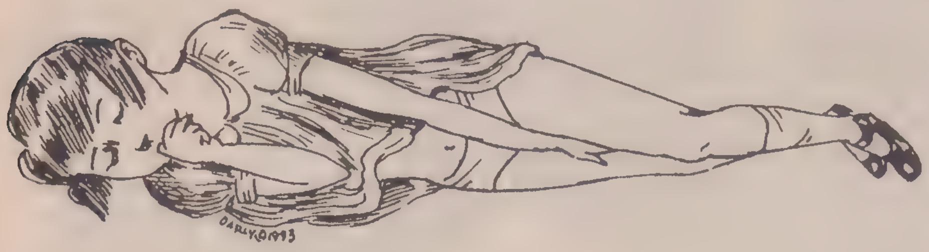
scattered and pensive school teacher with the largest collection of toy horses around. About her trips to the city on the train when she was a child. And about the men. About her love for the male sex. She talked about their hands and their backs and their whiskers that scratched rashy scrapes into her soft skin. She talked about the special place where the side of a man's stomach meets his hip bones. She told me about a naked man's body and the delicious terror and solitude she always felt after sex. She liked to talk about sex. She called it her weakness.

I would listen quietly, slipping a spoonful of soup into her mouth every now and again. She told me all about her life and then she began to tell me about mine.

I'm not sure how she could have had any true information about my past because as far as I know there was not a soul to supply any, but it didn't matter. I listened, and I believed. She told me about my Gram and Gramp—so in love, killed in the war; about my mother and her sister—inseparable but fought bitterly at times; my father—Baptist minister, rapist… raped my mother and then chastised her publicly for carrying the illegitimate "child of Satan himself." And about the way the girl, my mother, changed then into the woman who hated, fierce and specific. To her grave not another man touched her. Not so much as an accidental brush in a crowd. Literally eliminated men from her body and her life after that.

The woman described my mother as proud and strange and she said that when they stole me away from her while she slept after the birth, they stole a little sparkely jewel from her eye that never shined again.

I began to cry. I cried into her hair. She rocked slow and deliberate. She was keeping a secret. I knew she was. I could smell it in the curl of her lip. But she just kept on like always and soon she was far away in the parts of her head that did not make any sense.



I went inside the house and tried to remember—something, one true thing that I could call my own special memory, but there was only a closed box there. I went to sleep with a thumb in my mouth and the other hand warming between my legs.

Yes, I killed her. It's not what you think. It was an accident. I was loving her. I was trying to help. I was bringing a new life into the world. She was bleeding. And screaming. I didn't know what else to do. I had to save the life inside, it's feet sticking dully out the hole. She was pushing but it was big and then she stopped pushing and just started sucking in more and more air like she was going to save it up in her cheeks 'til spring came; and the little feet moving slower and slower, not much at all, just a toe wiggled every few minutes and I couldn't get her to breathe right and the thing was stuck up inside her and everything was getting redder and redder.

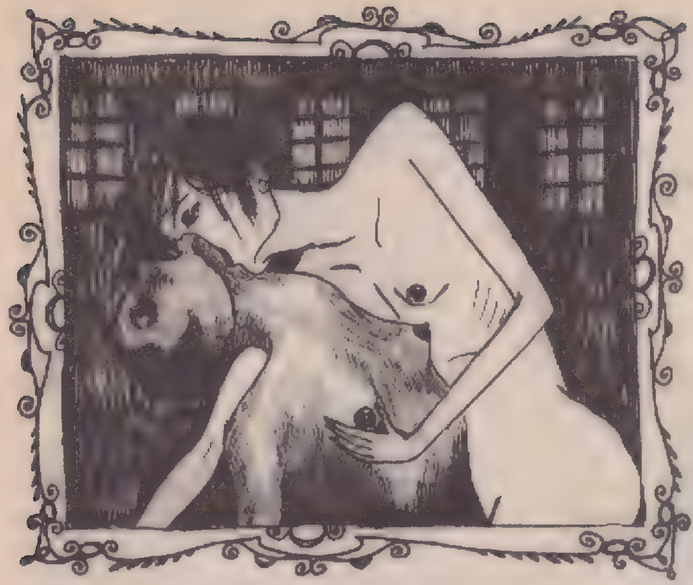
I don't know exactly how this next part went. I must have ripped her clean open. I just remember thinking, "Neither one is breathing. They are both dying." And her words of a week before tumbling back to me.

She had pulled me close, her breath smelling old and poisonous. "You and this child…it's no mistake…You've waited your life for its arrival…the other part of your soul…never another," she was twisting my hand, and squeezing too tight. I wanted to smack her face. A sad face. The most beautiful face I had ever seen. It seemed to plead with me to listen hard; to concentrate. "Black days…search for him…never be whole 'til you walk side by side…embarrass the devil…I prayed, you came…the wind brought you…find him. You will know him. I am dying," said she.

I remembered these things and I felt as if it was my own life that needed to be pried away from her. I felt a desperate energy rise, and then—he was crying and she was dead.

I spent the next fifteen years in a punishing atmosphere. The combination of no money, no family and the butcher job I had performed had landed me in a sanitarium designed for the criminally insane and the people who have no place.

The toughies and the better-off-deads floated angrily along occasionally touching down for a lurid display of blunder and hotheaded eruption. No doubt they were unwilling subjects in the "creative prescription" program, in which bored members of the medical staff wagered to see what would happen when a patient ingested the precisely wrong drug for his or her specific afflictions. These were the patients you prayed never deciphered the difference between you and a post or a chair. The long coats, hand picked out of scores of applicants for their unhealthy need to control and their solid lack of compassion, never changed facial expressions. Even when they

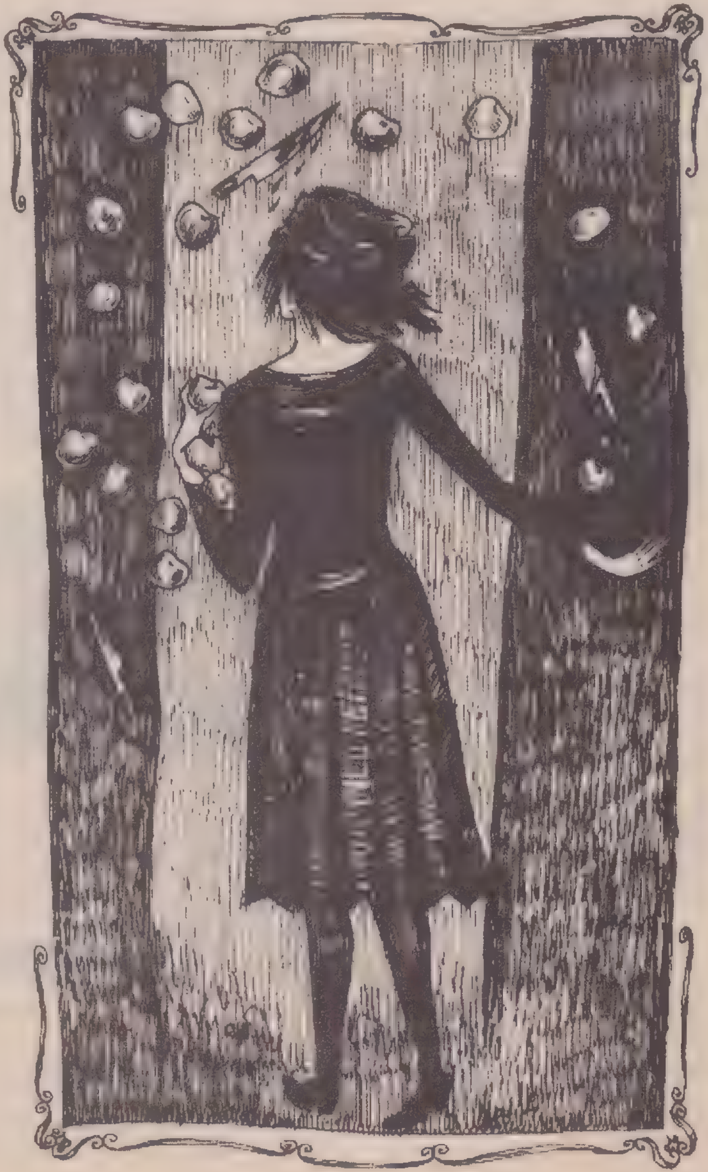


were twisting your arm behind your back or shoving your head between their legs, there was always that strange look (a smile of some kind?), as if they were fitted with invisible dental fixtures designed to reveal the stretch of brown gum lining the tops of their broken yellow teeth. There were the slow talking spit waddlers, sweetly shaving the ends off of every word they tried to speak so that all you could hear was the soft middle part. The rest of us played dumb so that they would not have to make us that way. And I lived on and on just waiting for one sacred moment when I could be alone with my dream, my pulse, my beautiful angel, my African princess who saved me, loved me, kissed my breasts, talked to me for hours. She was my girlfriend in the insane asylum. Years went by. She grew into a woman while I held her in my arms, kissing her neck, swans neck, delicious. Shortly before my release she disappeared.

They let me out of that place when I was 23 years old. They gave me a stiff black dress and enough money for one meal. I went into town hoping I'd find that cry-baby boy. Now he'd be almost a man.

But when I got there the cupboard was bare.
I looked for a place I could hide.
The thieves and the whores were all doing their
chores. An applecart turned onto its side.
I went into a store to get food. The shopkeeper
was beating his wife.
I stepped up to the counter, put my money
down, and purchased a wood handled knife.
It was then that I heard the crying sound. A
sound I should never forget;
a sad little boy, or a man, or both. It cut
through the coarse of my breath.
I listened for where it was coming from, and
like a sleepwalker I walked
towards the sound– fifteen years
fifteen years, dead and gone
here it is, fifteen years
here it is
Inside the alley were a boy and a man, a fat man who
stank of vermouth.
The boy was a cry-baby, the man was a pig.
From his Prince Albert swung a shiny gold tooth.
I stabbed that man right where he stood, and I
grabbed my little man out from under him.
I yanked the hypodermic needle out of his arm,
and I said, "Come on Moses, We're going where
things are a little bit more polite."

We scooped up as many apples as we could carry and headed off for better times, better times, better times.



Our answer to
Rush Limbaugh,
it's

Dad speak

staring,
my dad!

DAD APPEARS HERE – COOL AND COLLECTED – WITH CAT STARS COOKIE AND BOSTON

Dear Dad,
I liked the spunk you displayed in your two interviews. Enough to pester you with a few sallies.

From your first foray into the public forum in the June/July issue: You say a big help in reducing the deficit would be to remove all (or at least most!) of the American troops from their foreign posts. Now, I know this is an indirect link to the deficit, but would the loss of revenue that would undoubtedly occur for America's interests overseas be any less of an amount than is incurred by running a deficit economy? Couldn't it possibly be much more? The instability caused by a total American troop withdrawal from other countries could cause a severe drop in our GNP. Is it worth it? And what's wrong with a deficit? What's wrong with running some inflation and/or printing more money? Doesn't this pale in comparison to the consequences of your plan?

In your second interview you claim that the events of the last twenty-five years have caused a dearth of men in high places with principles and morals. Was it so much better in the past? What about the whole era of the "Political Machines" – Tammany Hall and the like? Maybe it is harder for a scrupulous honest man or woman to make it these days. That leads me to the question. Why is it that the people we want running for office - the "good" people – aren't running? It seems the well-educated and public-minded have no desire to get into the political arena. If you want to use James Madison as an example of this type, when and why did the James Madisons of the country stop being interested in the governmental process? And doesn't the public deserve some, if not a lot, of the blame? Time and time again the public wants to and does (at least appear to) believe in impossible promises - i.e., no new taxes. Aren't the politicians telling us what we want to believe? Is it their fault that they will be unpopular and not electable if they tell the truth? Aren't they lying because they don't have a choice?

Well, I think that's enough for now. Eagerly awaiting your reply.

Jocko.

CUTE NEW YORK BOY JOCKO SHOWING OFF HIS POOPIE HAT

Dear Jocko,

Most American troops are stationed in countries that either are economically advanced or have a large trade surplus with the US. Our largest number of troops are stationed in England, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Italy. We spend 150 billion dollars each year to pay for these bases. Much of this money remains overseas because we build the bases with local labor, hire locals for most non-military positions, buy local food, clothes, and supplies. We do not have this 150 billion so we borrow the money each year from the Japanese at 7.6% interest over 30 years. That means we have to pay back the Japanese $500 billion for the honor of defending their country each year. Jocko, that's more money than it would take to make every homeless or poor person in America middle class. That's more money than what the I.R.S. collects in personal income taxes each year.

What's wrong with inflation? Just ask anyone old enough to remember Jimmy Carter. Savings & Loans were brought to near bankruptcy when interest on savings shot to 13% while the income on old mortgages was 6 or 7%. In order to save the banks, Carter set about deregulating the Savings and Loans (which of course led to a $140 billion bailout during the Reagan-Bush years.)

Retired people who had put away enough money in government bonds to live comfortably found out quickly during Carter that $100,000 in Government bonds paying 4% became worth $30,000 when interest rates hit 13%. While their savings were destroyed, the cost of living doubled every six years. Those who had homes were forced to sell them in order to afford to live, while those who didn't ate cat food. Businesses were selling goods one day and then when they went to replenish their stock the suppliers had raised the price so high that they found they had actually lost money selling the goods. Profits dropped. Imports rose. The Dow Jones, which stood at 1,015 in 1976, stood at 759 four years later.

Taxes were set from 0 to 70%. So as the cost of living doubled, taxes tripled because you moved up to a higher tax bracket, while your standard deductions remained constant. The government loved this because it meant a tax increase every year (this inflation tax was killed by Reagan in the 1982 tax bill when he set only two brackets and tied standard deductions to inflation).

State taxes also rose. State income taxes were a percent of the higher federal taxes. Even worse was the rise in property taxes. These taxes were about 4% of the value of the property. But as the average California house went from $25,000 to $150,000 the property taxes shot from $1,000 to $6,000. Renters didn't escape – rents rose 200 to 300 percent. As tens of thousands of Californians were losing their homes and renters were becoming homeless, Prop 103 was passed to return taxes to 1976 levels. And Santa Monica and Los Angeles instituted rent control.

Coins used to be made with precious metals, but during Carter a $35 ounce of gold went for $800, a $1 ounce of silver went for $50. People were melting down their coins and selling them. There was a penny shortage because copper pennies were being melted. Banks were paying $1.10 for a dollar's worth of pennies. When was the last time you saw a silver dollar?

Jocko, let's say that Jimmy Carter was an honest man – stupid, but honest. Let's even say he was as caring a president as Harry Truman. Then why did Jimmy Carter take big bucks from BCCI? Jocko, it's not the man, it's the system. People who want to be elected get big money from pals who want favors in return. The more money, the more likely he's elected. From these elected officials come the choices for higher office. Jimmy Carter took money from the most corrupt bank in the history of the world because that's the system we have allowed our politicians to set up. We could stop this nonsense by not allowing individuals to give money outside his voting area. No donations by government employees except to their own campaign. All money not spent in a campaign must be returned to the donors. Government employees cannot sell or lobby the government, period. Total government pensions could not exceed the income of the average American. Pay for any government employee could not exceed three times the average American's pay. Fringe benefits should be tied to the average American's benefits. This might give the politicians a little incentive to make the average American a little richer.

Dad.

Dear Dad,

Sorry about the photo, but you know I only do it because I love you.

Darby.

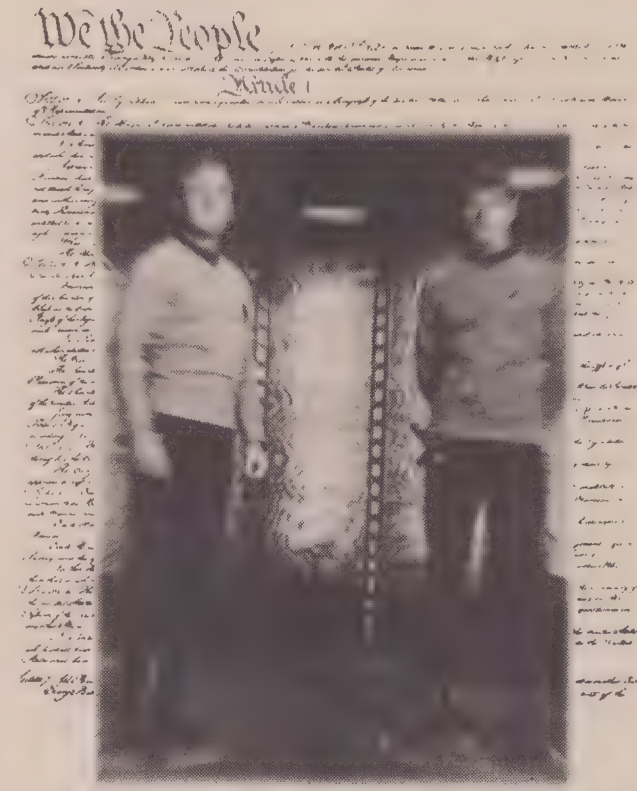
For any answers to your politically fucked-up questions please send them to "Dad" c/o P.O. Box 3166, Hollywood, CA. And to Rush Limbaugh: My Dad publically challanges you to a debate on the "issues". We are anxiously waiting for your reply. The date and time are up to you.

COPYRIGHT LAW

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

BY ALAN ANDERSON

Beginning with the appearance of the Xerox machine in the early '70s, advances in electronic, digital, and computer technologies have made possible cheap, easy, and increasingly faithful reproductions of original works. The murky-gray copies churned out by the first unwieldy photocopiers were a marvel in their day, but the intervening two decades have given rise to the fantastic wizardry of color Xerox, scanners, laser printers, and high powered graphics software packages. Sound technologies have yielded equally impressive tools through the development of digital sampling and reproduction devices. The proliferation of the tools unleashed through these advancing technologies has given rise to new forms of creative expression; expression that is based on the quotation and juxtaposition of pre-existing texts (e.g.: songs and images). However, these new forms of expression are often in violation of copyright law. Copyright doctrine – the concepts on which copyright law is based – appears to contain no provisions for these new types of cultural production, and this fact has given rise to a conflict between copyright protection on the one hand, and freedom of expression on the other.



As the specter of the Information Highway looms on the horizon, the potential for broad-based, populace access to information and interpersonal or "narrow cast" media is exhilarating in its promise to provide a voice to individual or fringe perspectives in the society. The evolution of interpersonal media will provide shading and nuance to Culture – a kind of subtlety that is not possible in one-way mass culture artifacts, such as the hit record or blockbuster movie. However, this kind of cultural dialog may be achieved only at the risk of trampling on rights currently and traditionally protected under copyright law. If an effort is made to apply copyright law in a strict fashion to new forms of interpersonal media, the result will be the suppression of the individual voice. This growing dilemma between copyright protection and freedom of expression should be considered carefully in order that we may forge a framework that both preserves the creators claim to credit for an original work and allows others in society access to and usage of the cultural signifiers contained in those original works. If we are hasty to legislate regulations that are prejudiced in favor of the personal property rights of creators of original works, then we run the risk of imposing a kind of *a priori* censorship upon those in society whose need for creative expression may be one of reaction rather than innovation.

The fundamental theory behind copyright doctrine is that creative works or inventions developed by individuals benefit society as a whole. Copyright doctrine, as framed in Article I section 8 of the Constitution, grants the creator a kind of mini-monopoly over his or her creation. The law stands behind the individual's claim as a guarantee of personal rights to profit from his or her work. However, this monopoly is not unlimited. The founding fathers recognized that many new creative expressions find their genesis in previous creations. Therefore, because the underlying objective of copyright doctrine was to stimulate new works, the authors of the Constitution sought to temper the scope of protection provided the individual by copyright law, in order to ensure that future thought and invention would not be stifled.

Traditional copyright doctrine evolved in relation to primarily text-based media, such as novels and poetry in the creative arts, and treatises and texts in the field of science. As invention has propelled our culture through new technological ages (e. g. sound recording, radio, motion pictures and television, etc.), there has been an effort to extend these text-based copyright concepts to provide protection among newly introduced aspects of these mediums. However, the differences among the formats and the unique problems presented by each new medium has not always enabled neat nor easy extrapolation of copyright law. A sound recording is not the same as a novel or a text book; at best, one serves as a flawed model for the other. The fabric of copyright law in this digital age is stretched beyond elasticity, and has begun to split at the seams.

We must be careful not to undervalue the concept of speech. The need of the individual to express his or her vision of the world through a unique voice is the fundamental claim to cultural identity in our society. If we enact copyright laws which so effectively deny access to original works, then we may disenfranchise entire groups of people from the sphere of cultural exchange. Our shared vocabularies are the entry to the world of communication. Ideas and theoretical concepts are simply more complex elements of vocabulary, and the more developed one's vocabulary, the greater the control the individual has of articulating a personal perception of the world. It is important to remember that the cultural artifacts in this era of images and information are also elements of vocabulary, and we should embrace the tools technology delivers to us that will enable us to manipulate these elements as surely as tongue and pen convey words.

The new tools being delivered by advances in technology have changed, and will continue to change, the shape of speech. The ease with which copies can be generated, altered, juxtaposed, and transmitted through the new avenues created by computer and digital technology is pushing at the boundaries of traditional notions of what constitutes speech, how one speaks or how one may speak. Hip hop music, which relies heavily on the quotation and collage of sonic elements of pre-existing original recordings, is one example of cultural expression that has grown out of digital technology. Copyright law must evolve to accommodate these new varieties of speech. If it fails to do so, it will come to conflict with the individual's First Amendment right to free speech.

There are many case histories which present various aspects of the deepening conflict between protection and usage of copyrighted imagery and sound. Listed below are a few examples of cases that illustrate some of these problems.

• (1) ARTIST V. PHOTOGRAPHER – Fine artist, Robert Rauschenberg, known for his found-object collage constructions, makes a work which includes a page torn from an issue of Time magazine. The page contains an ad for an automobile, which is comprised of a photograph by commercial photographer Pete Turner. Turner

Information is where you find it. -Librarian's motto successfully sues Rauschenberg for unauthorized use of his photograph.

- (2) PUBLISHERS DENY MUSICIANS ACCESS TO PROTECTED SONGS – English indie band Chumbawamba solicits permission to include portions of other authors' songs in a medley of their own construction. Upon considering the usage, the publishers deny the band access to the material.

- (3) TREKKIES CREATE UNAUTHORIZED STAR TREK WORKS – A video artist draws from the entire Star Trek cannon (the two television series, the movies, etc.) as raw material from which she creates her own Trek mythos by re-editing footage into new juxtapositions. Her pieces are works which create wholly new meanings from the familiar images and sounds of the original works. For example, one piece can be read as a call for Kirk and Spock to acknowledge the homosexual tension broiling beneath the surface of their relationship. The work implores the characters to accept their desire for one another, come out of the closet, and embrace each other as well as their shared destiny as lovers.

Each case applies the concept known as Fair Use Privilege. In brief, the concept of fair use is the idea that the individual can make certain, limited use of copyrighted material without obtaining permission from the copyright owner. Detailed in the accompanying side bar, Fair Use doctrine was developed to temper the extent of exclusivity a creator could exercise over an original work.

The concept of copyright, as it was originally framed by the Founding Fathers in the Constitution of the United States (Article I, section 8), was to encourage creative endeavor in the Arts and Sciences by providing guarantees of exclusive control to authors and creators over their original works. They reasoned that society as a whole would benefit from the intellectual and artistic works of the individual, and therefore sought to promote the creation of new works by providing a legal framework in which creators were guaranteed the financial fruits of their labors. Copyright doctrine extends to the individual the right of exclusive control over the use of an original work. In essence,copyright protection provides a creator with a mini-monopoly over an original work. This exclusive interest — as defined in The Copyright Act of 1976 — includes: REPRODUCTION RIGHT (the right to make copies of a protected work); DISTRIBUTION RIGHT (the right to sell or otherwise distribute copies to the public); RIGHT TO CREATE ADAPTATIONS [or derivative works] (the right to prepare new works based on the protected work); and, PERFORMANCE AND DISPLAY RIGHTS (the right to perform a protected work such as a stageplay, or display a work in public).

Recognizing that to bestow on a creator an unlimited exclusive control of a work would actually stifle rather than stimulate creative invention, the Founding Fathers established some limitations on the copyright protection of an original work: 1) ideas and facts are not protected; 2) works in the public domain; 3) the Fair Use privelege.

The concept that ideas and facts are not protected, means that one cannot claim copyright on facts or ideas themselves, but can only claim protection for the unique expression of these facts and ideas. Copyright will only protect the particular, original arrangement of terms assembled to present the underlying facts and ideas. Under this concept, works that are primarily factual or composed of data, such as scientific papers or telephone books, would be afforded the least protection, while more fanciful or artistic forms of expression such as poems, novels, and plays would receive more extensive protection. It was reasoned that if access and use of ideas and facts was limited, then the advancement of knowledge would be stalled. A creator should benefit from his work, to the extent that it does not impede further discourse.

The second concept, works in the public domain, refers to any work that belongs to the public as a whole and is accessible by any individual without restriction. Works considered in the public domain include works which were authored by the federal government, and works for which a copyright has been lost or has expired. The Copyright Act of 1976 established that anything published more than 75 years ago is now in the public domain. For works created prior to1978, the copyright lasts for 75 years from the date of publication. Works created by individuals since 1977 are protected during the life of the author for an additional 50 years.

Further restricting the extent of copyright protection is Fair Use. Since the primary function of copyright doctrine is to stimulate the creation of intellectual and artistic works, the exclusive right of a creator over original material must be tempered so that a free flow of ideas can engender new works. Originally introduced in the 19th century, it was included as part of the Copyright Act when it was enacted in 1976. Section 107 of the Act provides that:

The fair use of a copyrighted work...for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching...scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered...include:

1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

First theorized in the 19th century, fair use has evolved into a series of guidelines to be applied as a litmus test to cases of potential copyright infringement. However, these guidelines are open to interpretation by the individual courts on a case-by-case basis, which has rendered the rulings to appear somewhat arbitrary. This appearance of haphazard and inconsistent approach has undermined the reliability of the outcome of litigation in specific cases, and therefore served as an effective deterrent to forms of expression which draw from, or begin at, the boundaries of other original works. Few knowingly choose to put themselves in jeopardy of punitive judgements by risking a usage which might elicit a ruling of copyright infringement. The threat of punitive action leads pragmatic individuals to err on the side of caution. While this is understandable, it is also unfortunate. Interpreted liberally, the concept of fair use, more than any other limitation on copyright protection, challenges the extent of a creator's exclusive control and ownership over an original work. Fair use occupies the pivotal position in the balance between authorship and ownership on one hand, and public access and usage on the other.

Of the cases described above, the ruling against Rauschenberg in favor of the photographer Turner best illustrates a destructive, ludicrous finding against fair use. While we should not discount the aesthetic talents of Turner, it is important to differentiate between the craft and advertising intent of the car ad, and the primary creative force behind the Rauschenberg work. It seems presumptuous, if not downright arrogant, for Turner to claim that his photograph is a significant factor in determining the success of Rauschenberg's artistry. The act of creation for Rauschenberg involves the juxtaposition of disparate found materials on a two-dimensional plane. The "art" emerges from the resonance that the combination of these disparate elements create. Rauschenberg's work possesses aesthetic value because it provides a space for context. He invests his creations with perspective; not meaning, perhaps, but a locus from which the viewer may glimpse a new perspective of the world.

The absurdity of the Rauschenberg ruling is that Turner's contribution is completely inconsequential. Rauschenberg could have inserted virtually any image in place of Turner's car. The physical appearance of the work assuredly would have been different if another image of a car had replaced Turner's; however, the underlying character of the work would not have been altered thematically.

In defense of Turner, one might argue that Rauschenberg is achieving financial gain from work that is in part due to labor for which Turner is not compensated. While this claim is difficult to dispute — especially with regard to Rauschenberg who has enjoyed a great degree of commercial success — it raises a larger issue with regatd to creative expression in the context of copyright law: namely, the identification of the art object as a commercial commodity. We need to recognize that this equation of art with commodity is a function of the socio-economic system in which our culture exists. We live in a capitalist society in which creative works are often regarded as objects that can be exchanged for currency. However, we should not allow our tendency to regard art as commodity to fool

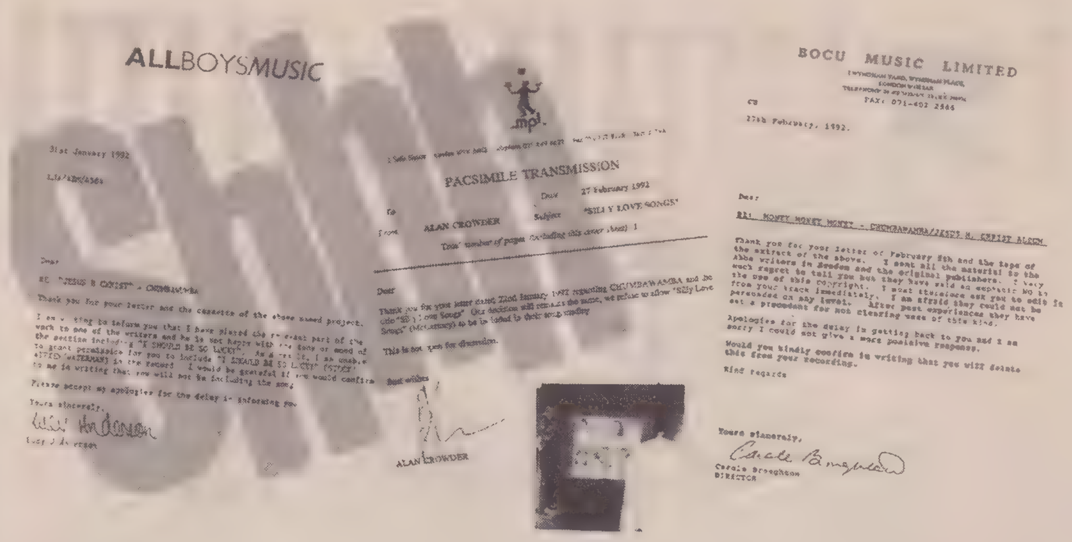
Commercial rock 'n' roll music is a brutalization of the stream of contemporary Negro church music... an obscene looting of a cultural expression. –Ralph Ellison.

us into believing that art is *only* or even *primarily* a commodity. We must not lose sight of the spiritual nature of creative expression.

Art is transcendent of any particular ideological or economic organization such as capitalism. First and foremost, people still create out of a desire to express, to communicate, and often to exorcise.

The award given Turner in this case sets a terrible precedent in that it renders illegal, and thus effectively censors in advance, valid forms of expression by those who wish to write new meaning through the manipulation of pre-existing cultural signifiers.

As part of the package for their most recent album, *Shhh*, Chumbawamba includes reproductions of three letters from publishers denying the band usage of requested copyrighted material. Among the artists and songs denied are Paul McCartney's "Silly Love Songs" and Abba's "Money, Money, Money". Each publisher flatly denies permission for the inclusion of their artist's music in a medley for an album titled, *Jesus H. Christ*.



ALLBOYSMUSIC

31st January 1992

Dear

RE "JESUS H CHRIST" – CHUMBAWAMBA

Thank you for your letter and the cassette of the above named project.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in informing you.

Yours sincerely,

mpl.

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

Date 27 February 1992

To

Subject "SILLY LOVE SONGS"

From ALAN CROWDER

Total number of pages (including this cover sheet) 1

Dear

Thank you for your letter dated 22nd January 1992 regarding CHUMBAWAMBA and the title "Silly Love Songs". Our decision will remain the same, we refuse to allow "Silly Love Songs" (McCartney) to be included in their song medley.

This is not open for discussion.

Best wishes

ALAN CROWDER

BOCU MUSIC LIMITED

27th February, 1992.

Dear

RE: MONEY MONEY MONEY - CHUMBAWAMBA/JESUS H. CHRIST ALBUM

Thank you for your letter of February 5th and the tape of the extract of the above. I sent all the material to the Abba writers in Sweden and the original publishers. I very much regret to tell you but they have said an emphatic NO to the use of this copyright. I must therefore ask you to edit it from your track immediately. I am afraid they could not be persuaded on any level. After past experiences they have set a precedent for not clearing uses of this kind.

Apologies for the delay in getting back to you and I am sorry I could not give a more positive response.

Would you kindly confirm in writing that you will delete this from your recording.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely,

Carole Broughton

DIRECTOR

Current copyright law governing popular music provides for access and usage of any published material through the payment of mechanical licensing fees. These fees are standardized and compensate the publisher a few cents per copy sold. The practice of performing another artist's material is known as making a "cover" version. The right cannot be denied, as long as the new version does not alter the essential attributes of the original – i.e. the melody, the lyric, etc. If, however, the artist making the cover alters the original (e.g. by changing a few words, transposing some of the chords, or by coupling one song with another in a medley) then the work is no longer considered a cover; it becomes a derivative. In order to record a derivative version of a song, the artist must usually submit a detailed description of the intended alterations, and apply for the express permission to make the new version.

Chumbawamba was most likely denied access to the songs in question out of fear of negative and/or critical usage of the material, which might reflect badly on the original artists. Chumbawamba is an independent band that has rejected Music Industry pursuit of the mass market and the attendant denial of individualism inscribed in cultivation of the mainstream. The band has a reputation for being subversive, and regardless of whether it is anarchist or socialist in its orientation, it is perceived as a threat to the aspirations of the commercial pop music business.

The requirement of consent by the owner of copyright to enable the rendering of derivative works elevates the author to a position of cultural dominance over those who may be critical of him or the original work. If a band such as Chumbawumba wishes to juxtapose "Silly Love Songs" and "Money, Money, Money" to create some kind of social commentary, might not this take precedence over the sanctity of the initial work? Why should we respect the sanctity of an original work if the work insults us? Culture is a shared exchange among all members of society. If it is limited to a one-way proposition, we are forced to relinquish individuality, dignity, and humanity. We become Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*, wrapped in a straightjacket in a theater chair with our eyes propped open, forced to ingest an endless flow of music and image. The individual must have the liberty to quote and alter the cultural signifiers propagated through mass media. Without this freedom, we are forced to occupy the passive role of observer with regard to culture.

Star Trek pieces created from original elements stand as an extreme form of derivative work. Here, the viewer/consumer has co-opted the iconography of the original cannon and manipulated it to create new texts whose meaning is completely different from the original text. Paramount, who controls the rights to *Star Trek*, would no doubt disapprove of the circulation of such derivative works. The propagation of 'artificial' texts, such as the one that pausits the notion of Kirk and Spock as homosexual lovers, threatens to subvert the entire cannon by clouding the voice of the original work and confusing the viewer. If artificial texts, are allowed to circulate, they may undercut the authentic texts or provide a kind of schizophrenic voice which disrupts the unified view presented by the 'authentic' cannon.

On the other hand, the Trekkies who re-edit the original material together to create these new texts are practicing a form of assertive speech. By co-opting the iconography and re-writing the meaning, they have hijacked the characters of Kirk and Spock from their heterosexual text and re-cast them as role models in a new homosexual text. Since Kirk and Spock are fictional anyway, why could they not be gay? Gene Roddenberry may have introduced those characters and that universe to our imaginations, but those symbols now exist autonomously inside our own minds. Is it right that only the creators of images be allowed to manipulate those scenes in our imaginations? Derivative works, which send the original spinning off in new directions, although not part of the authorized cannon, come to occupy a legitimate space in the Trek pantheon.

To be sure, the pseudo-texts constructed out of the Trek iconography and circulated on an underground network are very popular among Star Trek aficionados. The re-orientation of the Trek signifiers can be viewed as a kind of virtual doll-playing. The individual voice asserted in the re-juxtaposition of familiar elements in novel, contradicting the patterns of the original, stakes out the unique identity of the individual. One can imagine children, equipped with Kirk an Spock dolls, constructing their own narratives, and working out a dialog between themselves through the manipulation of the figures: "I love you, Spock." "Thank you, Captain."

We must recognize that the proliferation of high-technology media tools throughout the populace will open new avenues for cultural expression. Society should strive to accept this new era by creating a legal framework that incorporates these types of cultural appropriations as legitimate forms of expressions, free of litigation. The creation of this type of system would require a fundamental shift in the way we view derivative or reactive expression in cultural production. The new model would provide that once a work is injected into the cultural consciousness, it is no longer the private domain of the creator, but is owned, in part, by the individuals who populate society. All cultural artifacts would be regarded as raw materials for future cultural production. An art object, song, photograph, or filmic narrative would all be considered as elements of an ever-growing cultural vocabulary.

In order to effect these changes to copyright law, we should go back to the founding fathers' concepts and re-extrapolate with the new technologies in mind. Current law is a quagmire of rules and regulations. A simplified code should be hammered out which clearly and concisely lays out the parameters of copyright protection, while it drains the current code of its malicious, punitive underpinnings. This new code should be honed, perhaps to a series of well-defined usage categories, with mechanical licensing fees laid out in tables much like postal rate cards, which define the necessary postage required to mail a parcel based on its weight, the distance shipped, and the class in which it is carried. With such a system, the creator of an original work would receive credit and financial compensation for his creative contribution. However, at the same time, no one could be denied access to or usage of another's original work in the production of new, creative expressions. If no effort is made to address this burgeoning conflict, we will find our judicial system mired in ever-increasing copyright litigation, robbed of any potential for an extremely rich source of cultural dialogue.

HATING BAND NAMES

by Darby

Kerin can't even listen to some bands because of their names. These publicists she schmoozes with call all the time, asking if she listened to, reviewed, or enjoyed whatever the CD of the month is. And after dodging the calls for a few weeks they usually pin her down, and she'll have to admit that she just couldn't listen to the thing because of the band's name:

> *I just can't help it. I have this problem with certain band names. It goes beyond just not liking their name, though. I absolutely refuse to listen to a band whose name I hate. Consequently, I sometimes miss out on hearing a good band, like Beat Happening, for example. I mean, what kind of name is that? I managed to avoid hearing anything by them until Darby dragged me to one of their shows, and I saw my huge mistake. Still, I can't seem to get over my name prejudice. Does that make me a bad person? Here are some of my most loathed: 4 Non Blondes, American Music Club, Bikini Kill, Bim Skala Bim, Hair and Skin Trading Company, Low Pop Suicide, Moth Macabre, Stanford Prison Experience, Tex and the Horseheads, The Fall, The Gits, The Swirlies, The Wild Stares (this was another Beat Happening experience), TVTV$, Walt Mink (the only way I would listen to this band is if I had to do a piece on them for, say, Vanity Fair) and the list goes on...*

Well, I have a similar problem. I can't listen to "Love" bands or "Head" bands for that matter [Hammer, Flower, Lemon, Severed, or even Base]. Some "Jesus" and "Kill" bands I've had to learn to live with – but I must say it has been hard. I'll let the Sugarcubes off the hook, 'cause they've been around a while and, well, I love them... but can't these other bands get a little more creative instead of copying them and throwing "Sugar" in front of their name? The band Sugar couldn't even get creative enough to find another word to go with "Sugar". And why must the [Super]suckers, [Super]chargers, [Super]chunk, [Super]conductor and [Super]collider all have to tell me that they are a "Super" band? Shouldn't I be able to figure out for myself if they're super or not? Don't these people realize that us music fans can hardly keep up with all the bands and their names as it is? Why do they insist on making it even more difficult? For instance, I know I like some material of one of those "Super" bands, but I just can't seem to remember which one.

Anyway, we've got a lot of friends, and some of these friends are pretty disturbed people. You can tell a lot about a person from what they do in their "free" time. So, here's a glimpse into the mind of a few obviously very over-worked individuals. When they're not hating Brenda, they're mutating band names (often mixed with a dash of pop culture) and making *NEW, IMPROVED* band names. If only more of today's bands had this kind of imagination!

NAME DROPPERS ON A BENDER

By Frontier Records, Sarah Apfel, Howard Greenberg, Antone De Santis, Karen McBurnie, Jon Hammer, Heatmiser, John Moen, Rebecca Gates, Dan Wright, Chad Witt, Nils Bernstein, John BK3, Cynthia Howell, Gaylord Fields, Stu Meyer, Yvonne Garrett

11th Dream Daisy Chainsaw Kittens
AbbananaramaDonna Summer
Alice Ghostley in Chains
Amy Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine
Amy Foster Grants
Anaheim Steam Roller
B52 Live Crew
Baby Huey Lewis
Bad Miss Manners
Bau Wow Wow Haus
Bay City Rollins Band
BikiniKillDozer
Billy Midol
Blood Sweat and Tears for Fears
Blue Oyster Culture Club
Bodycount Chocula
Bronski Beat Happening
Bryant Gumball
Buffalo Tom Waits
Camper Van Halen
Captain and Tenille Diamond
Catherine Bachman Turner Overdrive Like Jehugo Largo
Catherine Wheel of Fortune
Chaka Consolidated
Channel 3 Dog Night
Courtney Love American Style Council
Crispin Gloverboy
Crowded House of Pain
Cyndi Flauper
Darryl Strawberry Alarm Clock of Seagulls
David Soul Asylum
Death of Samatha Fox
Dinahshore Jr.
Doris Day Might Be Giants
Drive Like Jay Leno
Duran Durandy Newman
Earth Wind and Firehose
Everything But the Girltrouble Funk
Excedrin PM Dawn
Fab Five Freddy Mercury Rev Horton Heatmiser Douglas Quintet
Family Circus Lupus
Flamin' Lipps, Inc.
Fleetwood Mackenzie Wilson Phillips
Flintstone Roses
Foreignurse With Wound
Fred & Ethyl Meatplow
Fugazi Z Top
Gang of Foreigner
Garth Foster Brooke Shields
General Public Enemy
GG Allin Parsons Project
Gladys Knight Ranger
Godflesh for Lulu
Grateful Deadmilkmen at Work
Green Jello Biafra
Heavy DeeeLite
Helios Lobos
House of Pain Teens
Human Dramarama Bums
Husker Doobie Bros.
Ice Tijuana Brass
Iggy Pop Will Eat Itself
INXSex Pistols
Jack Lords of the New Church
Jawbox Car Willie
Jesus and Mary's Chains Addiction
Jim Hendrixoral
Joan Jettboy
Jose Feliciano Means No
Josie Cotton and the Faster Pussycats
Kaga Goo Goo Dolls
Kenny G Your Hair Smells Terrific
Kim Gordon Lightfoot
KMFDMC Hammer
Kool and the Gang of Four
L7 Year Bitchmagnet School of Fishbone
Liza Manilli Vanilli
Martin Luther King Crimson
Marvin Gaye Bikers on Acid
Masonic Youth
Miami Soundgarden Machine
Million of Dead Cops Shoot Cop
Minnie Pearl Jam
Mission of Burmaterial Issue
Modern English Beat Happening
Monie Love & Rockets from the Crypt
Mother Love Battery
Mr. Potatohead of David
Mudhoney, I Shrunk the Kids
My Sister Samhain
Neil Young MC
Nirvanna White
Nitty Gritty Dirt Band of Susans
Patsy Clinesturzende Neubauten Thousand Maniacs
Pavemental as Anything
Peter Gabriel Vez Costello
Peter Paul and Mary's Danish
Phranc Sinatra
Pink Lady Miss Kier
Plimsoul Asylum
PM Donnie & Marie
Poi Dog Pondringo Starr
Pointer Sisters of Mercy
Poison Ideee Lite
Public Enemy Lou Harris
Pussy Galaurie Anderson
Quiet Riot Grrls
R.E.M. Speedwagon
Ray Charles Manson & The Family Stone Roses
Rick James Taylor Dayne
Right Said Freddie Mercury
Rites of Springsteen
Rock Hudson Brothers
Ronnie James Devo
Sebadolivia Newton-John
Shannon Dohertito Puente
Shirley Temple of the Dog
Simon and Garfunkadelic
Skinny Puppia Zadora
Sloan Baez
Snackmasters of Realty
Steely Danzig
Steve Albini and Cecil
Surgeryplacements
Tad Company
Terence Trent Darby Crash Test Dummies
The Revolting Buzzcocks
Tom Waits for No One
Too Much Joy Division
Toto Recall
Tyrannosaurus Rex Smiths
U2 Live Crew
Ugly Kid Joey Buttafuco
Value Village People
Velocity Girlschool
Wall of Voo Doo Gurus
Weathergirls School of Fish
Ween Latifah
White Zombie Gees
World Donner Party
Yoko Eno and the Plastic Homo Band

If you can figure out any more please send them immediately to: Frontier Records, PO Box 22, Sun Valley, CA 91355

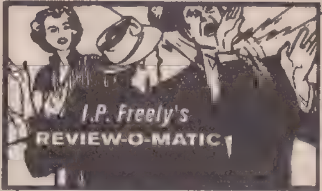
Except for the 'r', the letters in 'Brenda' make up exactly 5/9ths of the title *Ben Is Dead*. Is this intentional? –*I Hate Brenda* Reader

I.P. Freely's

ANTI-DEMO COLUMN

They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief); to dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together. They were the children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth. And now I am their song, yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

—*Book of Job* 30:5-10



	Rob Lippert	Rob's Play Toy	Sad Young Man O.A.T.	Abstrus Eplexia	Dougzig/Roadkill	Whitekaps	Betty Stress	Forrest Lawn	Liquor Bike	Mildred Pierce	Mr. Charlie	Headtrama	Pungent Poultry	Dub Addxx	Jacincto	Glorium	Gods Of The Revolution
SOUND QUALITY	3	4	2	3	0	4	6	6	6	5	5	4	5	10	9	4	2
LYRICS	0	3	4	0	2	2	0	4	8	0	4	8	9	2	?	9	0
ART & PACKAGING	4	1	0	6	2	1	0	4	3	0	0	3	9	5	9	1	1
UNCANCELLED STAMPS?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	5	9	0	9	0	0
I HAD TO TITLE IT FOR THEM (-10 pts.)	0	-10	0	0	-10	0	-10	-10	-10	-10	0	-10	0	0	0	0	0
BRAGGING, OVERBLOWN PRESS KIT (-15 pts.*)	0	0	0	0	0	-20	-20	0	0	-20	0	0	0	-15	0	0	-15
ERASE TABS INTACT? (10 pts.)	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I GOT TO USE A LOT OF BIG WORDS (10 pts.)	0	10	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	10	0	0	10	0
TOTALS	7	8	16	19	4	-3	-24	14	16	-5	19	10	44	2	27	24	-12

*Dumb photo nets additional -5 pts.

SCORING:

81-100..........................MATHEMATICALLY IMPOSSIBLE--IT MUST BE SOMEONE I'M SLEEPING WITH
70-79..........................THE MESSIAH HAS RETURNED
40-69..........................DESERVES A HUNK OF THAT MICHAEL JACKSON BILLION
20-39..........................MAYBE THEY'RE GOOD OR MAYBE THEY JUST LEFT IN THE ERASE TABS
0-19..........................NOT MUCH GOING ON HERE--SAVE YOUR MONEY
-20- -1..........................SHOULD PUT AN AD IN THE RECYCLER AND SELL ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT
-55- -21..........................SHOULD GIVE THEIR EQUIPMENT AWAY AND THEN LIGHT THEMSELVES ON FIRE
-55 and under..........................MATHEMATICALLY IMPOSSIBLE--IT MUST BE A VENDETTA OF MINE

ROB LIPPERT

Comedydrama 2

You sure don't get much music when you buy a tape from *Rob Lippert. Comedydrama 2* is a collage of aural comedy with brief snippets of music bonding it together. The humor, if that's the right word for it, is on the level of those shrill, moronic 'in-betweens' that you see on the USA Network's all night movies. Maybe its funnier than I think it is. Maybe I'm just not hip enough to understand it. Maybe if I smoke a bowl of Persian hash I'll roll around on the floor in hysteria. Maybe if I keep writing this column for another five years they'll revive The Gong Show and I can make six figures a year as the host.

ROB'S PLAY TOY

Rockville Motor City

From the swinging town of Rockville, MD comes the begging-to-be-titled debut tape from a studio-bound (one man?) project called *Rob's Play Toy*. The many musical moods of *Rob's Play Toy* are showcased on this 6-song cassette for the purpose of befuddling potential critics. Lots of synthesizer squirt sounds, backwards vocals and drum machine patterns at work here. One song, "Presidential Suite", starts out sounding like Ween in one of their more serious moments before mutating into something like Rush in one of their more comic moments. All of it adds up to not much, but at least he's created a weird world all his own. It sounds more like a compilation of various bands of the Rockville 'scene' instead of just one guy. Who knows–maybe it is. No credits are given to indicate who made the music. So then why is the artist who created the cover drawing (a rendering of a sack of protoplasm twiddling knobs on a tape deck) mentioned on the insert *twice?*

SAD YOUNG MAN ON A TRAIN

Your Boot, My Tongue

More from the Rockville 'scene.' I never heard of any bands from there before, and now all of a sudden I have two in front of me. This suburban sprawl stuff is getting out of hand. *Your Boot, My Tongue* is a lot more focused than the tape from that other Maryland supergroup reviewed above. Fuzzed-out vocals squawk over a throbbing, minimalist drum box as a skanky bass guitar pulses a steady beat through this 14-song effort. I had to throw in that gaudy term "minimalist", sorry. I know that *Sad Young Man* will appreciate it, seeing as how they like to show off how smart they are by throwing around a lot of references to tragic French art movements (i.e.: *"Song Of The Situationists"*) in their track titles.

ABSTRUS EPLEXIA

Triptic Of A Pastel Fern

Oh I can't believe it. This band or whatever it is has released this cassette as a LIMITED EDITION of 25 COPIES. So WHY THE *HELL* should I review something that NONE OF THE READERS CAN *BUY??* I suppose *Abstrus Eplexia* are just trying to be good capitalists by imitating those shabby little ersatz hippies at Sub Pop, putting out small amounts of mediocre pap and making lots of cash by hyping everyone on their collector's value. So there's a limited quantity of these tapes, I mean, SO WHAT? Hey, I can get into the act too. Right now, in my bathroom, nestled snugly at the bottom of my toilet bowl, I have –no kidding– a BIG PILE OF *SHIT!* Created first thing this morning and conforming to the most exacting standards of man and nature. These perfectly formed turds were produced in a limited run of 5 and, while they are not signed or hand numbered by the artist, would nonetheless make a handsome addition alongside your collection of Sub Pop 7" records. But remember–put in your bids early; this offer won't last forever! Send your $250.00 to: **I.P. Freely's Cool Turd Offer**, c/o Ben Is Dead magazine, P.O. Box 3166, LA, CA 90028. *LIMIT ONE PER CUSTOMER!!*

DOUGZIG

Live With The E St. Band 1990-'93

DOUGZIG

Screaming Yellow

ROADKILL

Guitar Vomit

Three tapes from Massachussetts containing an average of 19 "songs" each. They were all recorded on a microcassette dictation machine, apparently. Oh boy. Most of the music consists of experiments with one of those little sampling keyboards; *Dougzig* likes nothing better than to record one sample, stick the keyboard speaker up to his tape deck's condenser mic, and let it play for three or four minutes. He sings a bit too. You might treasure these fascinating tapes if you're living at the bottom of an abandoned mine shaft someplace, or maybe in Soledad Prison's solitary confinement tank.

WHITEKAPS

When Meat Rots

Youthful thrashers from Torrance, the *Whitekaps*, burn through 17 songs in an attempt to acheive punk rock stardom. They sing about stuff like getting too drunk to pee, grabbing girls in the bakery section at Albertson's, and of course, that ever-popular target, the *FUCKEN COPS*. Clean, tight and totally predictable. Ok, you say, but does this tape secure a place for the *Whitekaps* in that big mosh pit in the sky? Sadly, no. Right at the end of the tape they blew whatever chance they had at punker immortality with a really dopey cover of "My Ding-A-Ling."

BETTY STRESS

3:10 To Yuma

According to the cover letter that came with this one, Tucson's *Betty Stress*, "have managed to separate themselves from run-of-the-mill rock n' roll bulishit." Well, truth is generally hard to come by in press releases, but I think that statement really hits the mark. Judging from this tape, *Betty Stress* are creating a whole new, unique strain of rock n' roll bullshit all their own. ...Ok, alright, alright, they're not really that bad. I'm just being mean because the singer sounds like that guy in Men At Work and it's put me in a foul humor.

FORREST LAWN

We Built This City

Upon ripping open the manila envelope from *Forrest Lawn*, I thought that it was really going to stink up the joint. You see, on the tape insert, the band attempts to be eclectic and spell out their names *backwards* in the credits. That, combined with the name of the band, looked like a definite omen of

Death Rock stupidity to me. But after listening to the four songs, I find it's not too bad. The chick singer has kind of a cool voice, and the band plays pretty strong, even if their style is a little dated. However, something tells me that this band is benefitting from the fact that I couldn't make out any of the lyrics.

LIQUOR BIKE

Jim Dandy

The spartan liner notes on the insert say that this tape was "recorded in 20 hours" at some hell hole of a studio. And it sounds like it, in a good way. *Liquor Bike* let loose here with 6 songs propelled by an intense, slashing guitar-driven sound. The singer is the odd part of the equation. He has a southern-fried, RAWK AN' ROWL kind of voice that makes *Liquor Bike* sound like a Fugazi show after a Lynyrd Skynyrd roadie wandered onstage, punched out all the bouncers, grabbed the mic and went for it. *Liquor Bike* are yet *another* band from Maryland. What gives? What's coming to my mail bag next month–the Cal Ripken Jr. Tribute Album?

MILDRED PIERCE

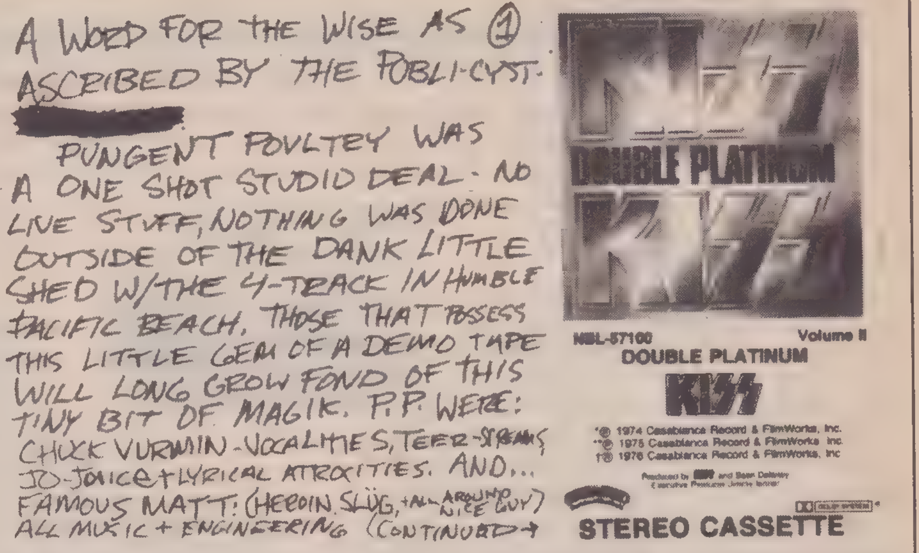
Enter Hackman

It's really amazing how many of these metalhead front men have been influenced by Metallica's James Hetfield, adopting his scintillating 3-note vocal range and growling over all their band's riffs. Power trio *Mildred Pierce's* music isn't all that derivative, though. Here they serve up five brooding, smoldering angst-ridden songs, ostensibly dealing with life in Alpine, CA–wherever that is. Good God, this column is falling to pieces before your very eyes. If I'm going to fall back on vague, pseudo-meaningful expressions like *'angst-ridden'* to describe a group's music then I might as well write for some hack magazine like *Alternative Press*. Hell, with low-lifes like me submitting material to Darby, *Ben Is Dead* will go under in six months.

PUNGENT POULTRY

Kiss Double Platinum

See photo at right.



A WORD FOR THE WISE AS ① ASCRIBED BY THE PUBLI-CYST-

[redacted]

PUNGENT POULTRY WAS A ONE SHOT STUDIO DEAL - NO LIVE STUFF, NOTHING WAS DONE OUTSIDE OF THE DANK LITTLE SHED W/THE 4-TRACK IN HUMBLE PACIFIC BEACH. THOSE THAT POSSESS THIS LITTLE GEM OF A DEMO TAPE WILL LONG GROW FOND OF THIS TINY BIT OF MAGIK. P.P. WERE: CHUCK VURMIN - VOCALITIES, TEER-STREAMS JO-JOICE + LYRICAL ATROCITIES. AND... FAMOUS MATT: (HEROIN SLUG, + ALL AROUND NICE GUY) ALL MUSIC + ENGINEERING (CONTINUED→

NBL-57100 Volume II

DOUBLE PLATINUM

KISS

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STEREO CASSETTE

FOR YOUR NEXT IMPORTANT PRESENTATION, GO WITH THE PROFESSIONALS AT SIMMONS & STANLEY ASSOCIATES

After 20 years as the laughingstock of pop music, the ugly specter of KISS continues to haunt us. Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley are always trying to beef up their already prodigous investment portfolio by re-hashing their tired routine, and now it looks like they've got a new twist: they're recycling their old album cover artwork and selling it to gullible young Hollywood bands–in this case, *Pungent Poultry*. They're a little new at this kind of work and are still learning as they go. Note in the example above how the airbrushing looks a bit dated, and their typographic skills need development. But make no mistake–Simmons & Stanley are THE hottest graphic design firm in town. Look for their incomparable creative stamp in the new Michael Bolton CD, *"Animalize"*.

MR. CHARLIE

Hairy Iguana

This one came in a Ziploc bag. I wondered why until I put this one in the deck, and then it became clear. *Mr. Charlie* is just trying to be responsible, and by utilizing this thin plastic membrane, he might shield the world from the odor of some of the most abysmal singing you're likely to hear anywhere. Not that it's off-key, I mean, who cares about that. It's the total lack of...it's just that... It's arythmical, and sort of whiney, and...I mean, I, I, ... I'm really speechless, I don't know how to describe it. I guess that's worth something right there so give the guy a hand. The music has its good moments. He's got a cool detuned drum machine going on behind a lot of moody guitars and echoey organ washes. And the lyrics, despite wavering between originality and garden varitey P.C. jargon, are cool. But if you want to liven up a dreary party, put on this tape and watch your guests howl as *Mr. Charlie* tries to shoehorn all these socially important lyrics into his backing tracks. He should have left in the erase tabs.

HEADTRAMA

Round Pound With Ogre Backstage At The Roxy

From Rancho Palos Verdes, that ghetto of the ultra-rich, come *Headtrama*, who make a good accounting for themselves here with a lot of drum programming, tape looping and pounding on metal objects. Their rhythms are driving and rock oriented; it's not BPM dance floor material. Sometimes the drum patterns go a little funny in the head and do a hardcore ultra-fast routine. The vocals are buried way back in the mix someplace, which works. Sound bites from Twin Peaks and various soap operas pop up and say howdy now and again. Four songs for $3.50 and it's all ok by me. And hey–I even get to title it!

JACINTO Y SU CONJUNTO

Down Home Music Vol. 1

I don't care much for accordions but this is the third time that *Jacinto* has submitted this tape so this time I figured what the hell. I'll admit that it was worth it. These guys also have a washboard and a bajosexto, whatever the fuck that is. The songs are sung in spanish so I don't know what they're about, but I like the track titles like "Rat Turf" and "Talk Real Bad." The artwork is first rate–the tape cover has a cool photo of three latino kids from La Puente standing in front of a '56 Merc picking their noses. They also decorated the envelope this came in with a strikingly lifelike drawing of everybody's favorite sleazy *puta*, Sean De Lear (cover girl of B.I.D.'s *Fashion* issue a few months back), which adds to their score in the Review-O-Matic by no small measure.

GLORIUM

Demolition

Last issue I got a tape from a band whose logo is a crankshaft. Now we have *Glorium*, who went to Pick-Your-Part to snap a photo of some dismantled transaxle to use for their cover art. If this keeps up I'll have a whole car soon. This icon expresses the tough and greasy essence of Glorium well enough I guess. Their sloppy, heaving 2-guitar attack underscores some sharp vocalizing from a singer who quite forcefully spits out his Sonic Youth-ish lyrics about angels with firearms and crack pipes having hot sex while driving big American cars at 100 mph in a snuff film coming to a mall theatre near you while the city burns down raining fire and brimstone upon all the poor, sainted, tortured alternative rock n' roll bands nailed upon the cross of I.P. Freely as their damned souls cry out in all their cathartic rage and anguish while clawing their way to the top of the college charts.

DUB ADDXX

Dub To The Truthseekers

If overindulgence in pot hasn't irreparably fogged your memory, you can relive those high times at Reggae Sunsplash Festival '87 with this treasury of instrumental jams, brought to you by a jolly septet of Bay Area weedheads known to Berkeley's Scrabble enthusiasts as *Dub Addxx*.

GODS OF THE REVOLUTION

Bullish Rage

This duo from Wisconsin claim in the cover letter for their debut release, *Bullish Rage*, that they are the heirs to the dubious rock throne abandoned by those multi-platinum cosmic twirps, Jane's Addiction. They're sending this kind of PR to the Anti-Demo column, mind you. Very bad form. The only *'Rage'* connected with this namby-pamby cassette is the kind that I experienced when I realized that there was no negative scoring in the Review-O-Matic potent enough to bury *Gods Of The Revolution* deep at the bottom of the heap of this month's crop of crap.

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ABSTRUS EPLEXIA/ 7 Woodsend Pl., Rockville, MD 20854
WHITEKAPS/ 20710 Manhattan Pl., Ste. 132, Torrance, CA 90501
BETTY STRESS/ PO Box 40545, Tucson, AZ 85717
FORREST LAWN/ 3219 Overland Ave. #6182, Los Angeles, CA 90034
LIQUOR BIKE/ 310 East Biddle St., Baltimore, MD 21202
MILDRED PIERCE/ 2236 Yucca Hill Dr., Alpine, CA 91901
MR. CHARLIE/ 50 Lithgow St., Dorchester, MA 02124
HEADTRAMA/ PO Box 3885, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274
PUNGENT POULTRY/ c/o Casablanca, 8255 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90046
JACINTO Y SU CONJUNTO/ 303 S Hewitt St. #420, Los Angeles, CA 90013
GLORIUM/ 509 W Aviation, Universal City, TX 78148
DUB ADDXX/ PO Box 410181, San Francisco, CA 94141
GODS OF THE REVOLUTION/ PO Box 210, Madison, WI 53701-0210

Is there iniquity in my tongue?
Cannot my taste discern perverse things?
—Book of Job 6:30

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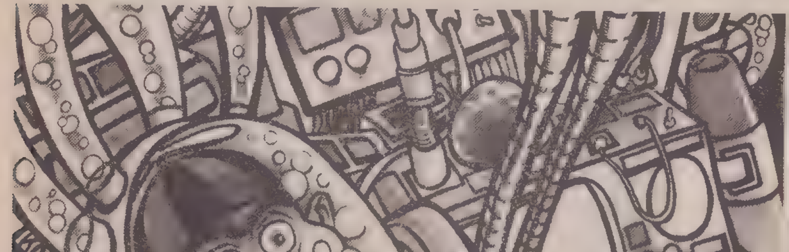

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CRITICA DE MUSICA

Okay, I have a confession to make. I just want to state first that my initial intentions are good. Records come in, and I listen to tons and tons of them. Hundreds of releases get the once over by me, not only because I want to get them to a reviewer who will appreciate or at least give them a chance, but also because I am forever searching for that new awesome band or album or song. And sometimes [though few and far between] there are things that I really enjoy [and sometimes they're things I'd love to slag] – so I grab these for myself. Anyway, as the issue drags along I get so caught up in everything that I end up not putting together these reviews [there's no record/CD player in the office]. So, as an intro, I thought I'd list some of the releases I think are worthy of review: Thinking Fellers Union (liked the first release better [which I never reviewed either] but this is also very inspired), Bikini Kill (too much hype for such dull music – or is the music itself really getting any of the hype? – rrretro), Free Kitten (ummm… I guess they're bored. I did kinda enjoy two songs but this wasn't a 7"), John's Black Dirt and Lesser 7"s (both pretty interesting), Velocity Girl (I snagged everything so Dave bought his own copy of the CD to review. I wasn't expecting to enjoy this band but yet again I'm a victim of catchy hooks), Ethyl Meatplow (not that we review major labels, but this one's long, long, long overdue), That Dog (I've listened to this double 7" more than the band itself thanks to a certain Grimley character. A flavorful first release, a creative band [better recorded than live], but are they already worth six figures to a major?), Earth 2 (ugh! need drugs), Anus the Menus (didn't care too much about this 7" but I love this band. Has a song about PopDefect on it – very important!), Tar (new LP, moves me). So that's about half of them. I'll try again next issue. –Darby

---

ANAL SOLVENT – WILD N' FREE [CD]
This is such the cool album! It's almost like a compilation, in that there are so many different styles of music, but it's all produced by this six member band. The first few songs (no names because the track listing is in Arabic) are rap over a hip-hop beat, and introduce the singer's very eloquent intonation. There's a down-beat, very moody synth number with nice, dark vocals to match, and there's the Negativland-style tracks – lots of sound layers and samples thrown here and there resulting in enjoyable chaos. But the strength of this album lies in the dance/rap songs. They make it sound so easy and the singer is just incredible. Anal Solvent are what Consolidated could be (if they would shut up every now and then and sing) and what other funk bands want to be. –Kerin (Soleilmoon, PO Box 83296, Portland, OR 97283

ARCWELDER – RALEIGH [7"]
Arcwelder didn't shatter my ears with the usual Touch & Go seal of excellence. Anyhow, a below average Touch & Go band is better than most. It took eight spins to decide that the three songs interested me. This 7" has a style of its own, which is nice. Catchy drumming with quick snare action occasionally inserted for tempo changes, and guitar riffing that frequently evolves. The thing that threw me off was the unique vocal style. He "sings", to the same effect that Whitney Houston "sings", only a lot more distorted and a lot more ugly. On the b-side, "Walls", there are two singers going simultaneously. I asked my roommate Jim if it sounded like a Czech anthem, but he said it was "too disco". –D. Chowee (Touch & Go, PO Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625)

BEEKEEPER – SEAFARER/CODPIECE [7"]
This makes a lot of good moves. It has the good ggression/chunk/melody/angst quotient, with a pinch of dissonance thrown in. I'm always happy when the vocals aren't burying everything else, so this gets points anyway. I'm not jumping up and down about it, but it throws some good punches and lands a few, enough, at least, for a technical in the ninth round. –S. Feemster (Karate, PO Box 93296, Los Angeles, CA 90093-0296)

BEME SEED – PURIFY [CD]
Eh… well… yeah… umm… this sucks. I can only compare this to the ugly days of dark gloom rock. The singing, oh God, the singing. Relentless and annoying. Her vocals just wouldn't stop. She "oohs" and "ahhs" in Siouxsie-esque style (not to dis the Banshees). Beme Seed have guitars on a full array of effects, and the slick, echoed-sounding production didn't do much for me either. My fingers never left the fast forward button. But this is just my humble opinion. Beme Seed backwards is Dees Emeb. –D. Chowee (No. 6 Records, Box 3306, NY, NY 10185)

BETTIE SERVEERT – PALOMINE [CD]
No, this is not a person, it's a band. In Dutch, it means something to the effect of "Betty Serves", referring to a Dutch tennis champion from the '70s. Well, Bettie serves, too. It is sometimes odd to me that a band from another country, raised around a different culture, can soak up so much American influence as to sound almost more American than a lot of American bands. In the case of Bettie Serveert, this is a compliment. They have a sort of fragile, buzzing grace and seem to shuffle through their songs half-awake, making you feel like you're peering in on someone's day dream. If this sounds the least bit interesting to you, snap it up before the suits from corporate gobble these guys up and make them something else. I hope that doesn't happen. –S. Feemster (Matador, 676 Broadway, NY, NY 10012)

BOB EVANS – DROUGHT [CD]
Yep. Another band without anyone in the band with the name of the band. (Follow?) These guys are chasing the post-punky power trio grail that not less than a few bands are doing currently. These songs sock a punch, but seem to leave my mind right after the stereo shuts off. I think this might be okay, though. You seem to get caught up in the spirit of them as they wiz by you, sort of like driving up Pacific Coast Highway too fast, looking at the road and the sea. Nonetheless, it's a good ride all and all. –S. Feemster (Skene, PO Box 4522, St. Paul, MN 55104)

CANDY MACHINE [7"]
I totally dug the song Candy Machine did for the Neopolitan Metropolitan box set on Simple Machine Records. However I was very disappointed when I listened to this. The songs drag and wallow all over the place, and never really go anywhere. Maybe with a catchy guitar riff or something, it would be better, but it just kinda stagnates. I'm sad. –Peter (Skene)

CASPAR BRÖTZMANN MASSAKER – DER ABENO DER SCHWARZEN FOLKLORE [CD]
Sweet Jaysus, my head is going to explode and flow all over the floor. Erik Satie wrote tone poems for mood, Caspar Brötzmann writes tone poems for slowly scraping one's testicles along a mile of railroad track. This is one of those right-on-the-money "noise" records that defines a certain mind and time and mood, much the same as Ornette Coleman or Can or Einsturzende Neubauten have in the past. Brötzmann switches from German to English and back again and builds pulses and screams up with his guitar, while Eduardo Lopez on bass and Danny Lommen on drums drill holes in your nervous system, making you flap around like a salmon after the CD player hits zero. This might just be the anti-love/power/jazz/rock/fuck-you trio for the 21st Century. –S. Feemster (Our Choice Eickeler Str. 25, 4690 Herne 2, Germany)

JESUS CHRIST
SUPER FLY

THE COCTAILS – THE EARLY HI-BALL YEARS [CD]
A fine collection of twenty-four Coctails tracks from their first three releases on the Hi-Ball label during the '89-91 period. This cool, acid-jazz combo serves up a groove that is best characterized as FUN. Uncomplicated but clever, this quartet employs a rotating tableau of sax, guitar, banjo, stand-up bass, vibes, and keyboards to evoke a kind of do-it-yourself beat-era cartoon soundtrack. This is the aural equivalent of a Lloyd LLewellyn comic – cool, daddy-o. These guys share a kinship with the likes of the Young Fresh Fellows – both in their carefree approach to songwriting and their mock-nostalgia fashion sense for an era that never actually existed (but ought to have). To my ears, the openner, "Whoopsy Daisy" and the winsome "Walkin' Down the Street" are the stand out toe-tappers, while "Road Hog" sounds like a Barmitzvah on acid. The only potential flaw to this disc is that there is so much of it (just over an hour)! You could do worse. All told, the Coctails take you on a musical tour from Pre-school to Beckett, from the inner mind to the outer limits. –Alan Anderson (Carrot Top Records)

The ear disapproves but tolerates certain musical pieces; transfer them into the domain of our nose and we will be forced to flee. –Jean Cocteau

COFFIN BREAK – THIRTEEN [CD]
I don't know; I must be entering the "jaded, bitter fuck" portion of my life. Granted, I never gravitated toward the "Let's Unite, Kids!" school of p-rock, but Jesus H. Christ, when a plodding Ted Nugent-meets-the-Archies song grinds along and the singer is singing something about how the sea and the trees call to him, I sit up and take notice. I then put pen to paper and write, "Jeez, you guys sure are earnest and righteous, but, well, you come across as well-meaning morons." The lyrics seem remarkably like short poem/essays from a Junior High creative writing class. The music is the usual adrenaline-fueled, stage-diving, hollow-rinking pop-punk so favored by the Orange County and Berkeley crowds. This album is like beating on a horse that's so dead, its bones are gone. –S. Feemster (Epitaph, 6201 Sunset Blvd. #11, Hollywood, CA 90028)

COME – ELEVEN: ELEVEN [LP]
Beautiful cover art, good band name, lots of hype. Oh yeah, pretty great songs, too. Come has ex-members of both Live Skull and Codeine so it's noisy and slow. It's also very sad at times and scary since singer Thalia Zedek sings like she's lived the lyrics – and most likely has. "Fast Piss Blues", the single, builds from a mumble of a blues riff to a churning dervish, with Zedek growling "I don't remember being born", before being submerged. Harrowing, yet engrossing stuff. –Dave Ehrlich (Matador)

CRACKERBASH – JASPER [7"]
Crackerbash is a good band, but it would be more exciting to watch them play with their 20 female groupies slamming around in their new Doc Martens and authentic grunge-look $50 flannels. On vinyl, they came off sounding weaker than they are, especially after just seeing them at UCLA and playing a few rounds of Lethal Weapon III with them. This record is on par with their Sub-Pop single (which I wasn't that crazy about). It would sound better with more drums and guitars in the mix. Their press sheet says that they've been called a "new Nirvana". I'm not sure about that. –D. Chowee (Empty, PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102)

H.P. ZINKER – THEIR LOUNGE LOOK

DIRT – SAHARA OF THE BOZART [CD]
In the midst of this "Do It Yourself," "Be Indie Rock" fad that we are in, I realize there is a down side to it. It means that anyone with enough money can put out a record, no matter how shitty they are. Well I think I just discovered *the* shit. Dirt, although musically pretty good, are as a whole, very bad. Most of this is due to the fact that the singer sounds like Tom Waits joining an alternative group (and I mean that in a derogatory way.) Raspy growling vocals send chills up my spine, and make me want to give up on the whole DIY thing. Maybe this should have been an instrumental album. –Peter (Worry Bird Disk, PO Box 95485, Atlanta, GA 30347)

DOWN BY LAW – BLUE [CD]
The formula is all there: strong vocalist, steady musicians, and catchy tunes. But I can't imagine anyone listening to this more than a few times without getting bored. After a while, the changes and choruses become predictable. "Turn Away" though, could have been one of the best Chemical People songs ever, but is lost on this so-so CD. –D. Gomez (Epitaph)

EARL'S FAMILY BOMBERS [7"]
First I put it on my turntable. It plays. Immediately, I run in a circle and shake my right fist in the air. I slam my roommate, jump on the couch, jump off the couch, hit the floor. I worm, I get up, I run in a circle again. Clockwise. The record ends and whoosh! Onto a pile of records to be sold. –D. Gomez (Major Label Records, 1501 N. 6th Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705)

EXPLODING WHITE MICE – COLLATERAL DAMAGE [CD]
A 23 song CD that showcases the lack of originality of these Aussies. The same ol'-same ol' Ramones style punk that wears a little thin after a couple of songs. I like the idea of a long, many-tracked CD of punk tunes, but "Zen Arcade" this is not. Unfortunately, variety doesn't explode with these mice. –D. Gomez (NKVO, 5310 Bragg St., San Diego, CA 92122)

FASTBACKS – ZÜCHER [CD]
Those familiar with Buzzcocks and Green Day will have "Fastbacks" as a part of their vocabulary already. Why? Because much like the crunchy assault of those combos, Fastbacks brew a special pot of pop that's full of slick rhythms and harmonic twists that cleanse the tired ear. This stellar Seattle quartet has never capitulated to bland pop meanderings or an overly heavy garage/punk thud. Especially since their brilliant *Very Very Powerful Motor* LP, Fastbacks have blazed new ground with frantic songwriting that can be witnessed at their never-pause-for-a-breath live gigs. *Zucher*, likewise, is a collection of songs butted against each other in succession, all containing some obscure tale of love and life against thrillingly paced speed pop with stomping drums or more subtle and reflective melodies. In fact a good half of this release is in the slower mode but pulled off with confidence, much like a slowly melting icepack, so we (the hyperactive) don't notice too much. "Hung On A Bad Peg" and "Kind Of Game" standout as does the funky organ-tinged "Never Heard Of Him". It's recommended that you listen to this all in one sitting to fully appreciate the flow of things. Very neat explosions here for sure. –Tomás (SubPop, PO Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98102)

FORESKIN 500 – MUSTACHE RIDE [CD]
It's got soul, I tell ya. Massive doses of heavy metal scratching with the compliments of ever-so-ballsy vocals. Somewhere near the demise of the Warlock Pinchers, a member scooted over to form this insane project. It clocks in at only 29 minutes but hell, it's worth it and if you happen to pick it up used, the score will be yours. I got your burger hangin'. –Evan (Boner, PO Box 2081, Berkeley, CA 94702)

FUDGE FACTORY INC. – LOCUST MIND/BODEGA [7"]
Glorious mud-caked noize with a dead-bead on the bullseye of obnoxiousness. It's hard to discern exactly what's going on lyrically and musically on "Locust Mind," aside from the appeal of its overwhelming volume (or is that vice versa?). On the flip, "Bodega" is strangely anthemic, eventually exploding into multi-guitar cacophony. Pressed fittingly on dirty brown vinyl and sporting a nifty bug drawing by Kaz. Play it on those mornings when you can't face yourself in the mirror. –Etienne Martinez (Mongrel, PO Box 481281, LA, CA 90036)

FURTHER [7"]
Who gives a fuck who they sound like, these guys rule – live, recorded and when you meet them. The a-side is an original which fucking smokes, the b-side is a cover of Olivelawn's "Beautiful Feeling" recorded live on KXLU. Any band that is banned from Bogart's for playing too loud is punk rock in my book. -Peter (No Guff, 4020 S.W. 327th Ave, Federal Way, WA 98023)

GAS HUFFER – INTEGRITY, TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICE [C]
Gas Huffer, in the tradition of NRBQ, the Replacements, and Popdefect, was born to be a bar band. I can see them now, sweaty, googly-eyed, spraying fluids in all directions, inspiring the audience to headbanging worthy of the Ramones. This is the most live-sounding effort yet – buy this and the world is your beer bar. –Bob Lee (Empty)

GRIMACE – TOMORROW'S GONNA ROCK [CD]
I was just thinking to myself this morning that Black Sabbath must, at this point, be the single most influential band in all of rock, undeniably the fathers of the "sinister riff". It is that sound of impending doom that's been handed down, twisted, ground, and spawned into millions of fragmented "sinister riffs" from millions of little bands.

Lo and behold, I open my mailbox this afternoon and there is Grimace: "sinister riffs" up the butt. Dynamic, with a real singer who hits notes and everything, and a bottom-heavy momentum. I could mention some other bands this sometimes reminds me of, but every one of them eats Black Sabbath for breakfast. Suddenly, I feel like a prophet, or maybe just a guy to whom everything sounds like Black Sabbath. Either/or, I like this and will display their sticker with pride. –Bob Lee (Gift Records, 774 Santa Fe, Denver, CO 80204)

HAMMERHEAD – ETHEREAL KILLER [CD]
Hammerhead share the same musical elements as their former label mates, Helmet. That kind of driving, post-hardcore, punk mixed with noise guitar and bass. It's a very '90s sound that's getting way too formulated, even though this decade is only three years old. That's not to say that these guys aren't good – a lot of people will be slamming their heads against the wall to this release. But listening to this whole CD at once is like taking megadoses of Vitamin C. You end up pissing both of them away. In small doses, these ten Hammerhead songs are the cure to your blues, caused by old alternative favorites sounding like Black Sabbath. –D. Gomez (AmRep, 2645 1st Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408)

HIGH BACK CHAIRS – SHARE/ONE SMALL STEP [7"]
Incredibly uninspired pop. Purely commercial dribble that should be shipped directly to KROQ. But, hey, all the punk kids will eat it up because it's on Dischord. The best part of the record is the goofy texture of the sleeve. –D. Chowee (Dischord, 3819 Beecher Street NW, DC, 20007)

HIJOS DE NADIE – EL PLUTO SISTEMA [7" EP]
Puerto Rican hard-core at its best. Recorded at a party and sounding like it. It's a bit dated (as in a decade late). If only I was 14 again. –Evan (Computer Crime, 74 Osborive Ave., Norwalk, CT 06855)

H.P. ZINKER – PERSEVERANCE [LP]
I have to admit that after the first two cuts I was set to give this a thorough thrashing. However, it did get a little better as this extremely warped disc continued to play. Prog rock at its finest with hints of metal, jazz, and bad funk seems to be what H.P. is all about. I guess it's okay for an Austrian to be pulling off very American sounding college pop in the same vein as, say, a Dinosaur Jr. or something. The times they approached a Slint type mellow-drama were definitely what saves this record. –Evan (Thrill Jockey, PO Box 432 E. 14th St., NY, NY 10009)

The opposite of talking isn't listening. The opposite of talking is waiting. – Fran Liebowitz

IN CAMERA – 13 (LUCKY FOR SOME) [CD]

This is the sort of early '80s stark, desperate "art rock" that makes me stand up and say "Yes, please!", with visions of thousands of Ian Curtis ghosts doing the herky-jerk in my mind. These guys should have been up there with Joy Division, early PIL, Gang of Four and Section Z's in the stark alienation derby at the end of the '70s, but they were on a small British indie lable that was just getting off the ground and the band broke up before they could enjoy any success. Well, that label was 4AD, and now they have re-issued In Camera's recorded output these many years later. It still sounds good. I bought an EP by them many years ago on a lark, and looked ever since for something else by them, only to find this CD staring at me all these years later. The song "Fatal Day" is worth the price of admission by itself. Thank you 4AD. Thank you In Camera. –S. Feemster (4AD England)

INTERMIX – PHAZE TWO [CD]

Frontline Assembly men Bill Leeb and Rhys Fulber continue the masterful saga of their side project Intermix on this second album. Always the innovators, the duo and their arsenal of synthesizers are dissecting and exploring every dance hall beat, contorting even the simplest hip-hop rhythm into a layered monster. But Phaze Two is still much more basic than their first self-titled release. Whereas Intermix (the album) contained moments of dark, ominous, and mesmerizing whirlpools of sound, Phaze Two is a non-stop dance machine. The band's complex layering has been slightly stripped down to accommodate the dance floor, and the BPM raised to 120 and above. The songs "Phaze One" and "Fall Out" are a descent into FLA induced rave, minus the annoying 1-2-3 whistle, while "Funky Hell" sounds like an updated version of Nitzer Ebb's "Control I'm Here". All eleven tracks on this suitably titled CD will leave techno enthusiasts aurally satiated, that is, until Intermix's next transformation. –Kerin (Third Mind Records, 225 Lafayette St., Ste. 407, NY, NY 10012)

IOWA BEEF EXPERIENCE – NEW SOUTH [7"]

Seattle bands have wet dreams about being as grungy as Iowa Beef Experience. I like them, but this 7" is not as hip as their Noiseville 7". Then again, it didn't come in limited quantities or have any beef jerky with it as incentive to want to like it. "New South" starts out with your standard macho-saturated, ultra heavy guitar riffing that begins to bore, but the guitarist jumps in with a nicely fucked up solo to salvage the song. The b-side, "Octopus", has some nifty double bass work from the drummer, but the song goes only so far. –D. Chowee (Rave, PO Box 41020, San Francisco, CA 94141)

JACKKNIFE – MY GIRLFRIEND'S BACK/ROCKET SHIP PARK [7"]

Amazingly minimal. No bass. "Rocket Ship Park" is my favorite; the name reminds me of a Japanese amusement park for some reason (probably because it sounds like something I'd read on a sign in Japan), but that's all I can make out of the lyrics: "Rocket Ship Park, Rocket Ship Park, Rocket Ship Park", etc., with some mumbled stuff thrown in, buried under two fuzz guitars' worth of distortion. This song sticks in my head, yeah, the phrase, the ambiguous meaning, makes my mind short-circuit and sputter trying to make connections, and all the meanings are real, as real as dreams or stream-of-consciousness. Amazing that so little can do so much. –Don Lewis (Discos Del Diablo, c/o Mike Colacion, 1043 E. Broadway Apt. E, Long Beach, CA 90802)

JESUS CHRIST SUPERFLY – BIG SHIT/ROCKET SCIENTIST [7"]

Oh my word. This came from Texas and had a cool cover by Kozik, so I'm thinking, "Hmmm, probably some cross-bred, cross-dressed weirdness on wax". Wrongo! Side one rides on retreads off Judas Priest's "Metal-By-Numbers Car", and side two is a sub-Ramones J-Chord wonder, except without the wonder. I really wanted to like this because of the cover, but, shucks, it just didn't trip my trigger. –S. Feemster (Rise, 506-A West 14th Street, Austin, TX 78701)

JUGHEAD'S REVENGE – IT'S LONELY AT THE BOTTOM [CD]

Punk Punk Punk. These guys seem to be carrying the beer-and-flannel and backyard punk party torch. This almost wants to make you stage-dive in place. It seems that there will always be fans of this music, and these guys pull it off with wall-to-wall guitars and drums, chugging at 110 miles per hour. It doesn't work for me, but I think enough of the right audience will hear it, drink a lot of beer, and form a pit, dude. –S. Feemster (Hard Records, PO Box 661131, Los Angeles, CA 90066)

KING CARCASS – OTHER MINDS OTHER SPECIES [CD]

All my good expectations about this Philadelphia combo's second slab were shot to hell from song one. *Other Minds* is lacking the heaviness of their debut for No. 6 and instead comes with a weak dose of rock fusion, the main element of which is annoying lead guitar lines that pluck along roads paved with plodding bass and drum mud. I can imagine sitting through about 10 minutes of this live before yawning and retreating to the bar to drown in cheap beer. Things King Carcass writes about: "a beast we call time", "to be not a man but a manhole", and "what shall we do with the grouse at our feet". Very classic indeed. Perhaps they've been reading *The Hobbit* a bit too much while smoking out to Robert Plant. Now I know the meaning of crud. –Tomás (No. 6)

FORESKIN 500
MUSTACHE RIDE

KUDGEL – ALPHABET SONG [7"]

Screwy boy pop that goes from jangly to noisy and back again, without ever getting too knuckleheaded. This is actually really funny and obnoxious, and the Wharton Tiers production leaves a good grindy crust in your speakers days after listening. I've also heard that Kudgel wear thrift-store dresses whilst performing, so there's another point right there... –Dave Ehrlich (Cinderblock)

LAUGHING HYENAS – CRAWL [EP]

The horror! One of the best bands in the world, the Laughing Hyenas, makes me feel like breaking into spontaneous bleeding. No other band confides in you, and hypnotizes you emotionally like they do. I try to filter the words and language out of John Brannon's raw, blood-soaked vocals, but it leaves me an exhausted, nervous mess. He's the most amazing singer. My roommate, Jiri, said "God, how long can he keep it up? I give him five years." Thank God it's already been longer. The Laughing Hyenas have a new bassist and drummer, but nothing has diminished. They have evolved into something new and equally magnificent (and not-too-different). In the title song "Crawl", John Brannon actually, (dare I say?) sings! Accompanied by Larissa Strickland's acoustic guitar, listening to "Crawl" fills me with guilt as he confesses his soul to a girl. He drags himself along the concrete, singing "Well I've been down/ but never been as low/ sometimes I feel/like I just don't know." The three other tracks are equally splendid. Now I have to go to bed. –D. Chowee (Touch & Go)

LILYS – IN THE PRESENCE OF NOTHING [LP]

I'm almost always caught between wanting to bludgeon My Bloody Valentine to death and wanting to fall at their scuffy feet in hero-worship. Sure, sure, 1991's *Loveless* is one of the greatest LPs of the past decade or so, but it's also led to legions of bands with ethereally buried (genderless) vocals and loads of warped-out, effects-laden guitars. The Lilys, who hail from Washington D.C., can't really be scolded for their efforts here, since some of it is pretty amazing. Rather than just carbon-copy MBV, these popsters seem to have listened to *Isn't Anything* a thousand times and then chucked it into the microwave. Great walls of sound swell, bubble, wriggle, smoke and everything else after the Lilys get ahold of their guitars. This band has a real knack for sudden shifts of tempo and unexpected melodies, with some moments (the last bit of "There's No Such Thing As Black Orchids", the devastating drone of "Tone Bender") being truly jaw-dropping in their intensity. Although not the most original-sounding release of the year, *In the Presence of Nothing* has its merits. Besides, just be thankful that scads of indie kids aren't gazing lovingly at copies of Pearl Jam's *Ten* when they pick up their guitars. Well, I guess that's yet to come... –Dave Ehrlich (Slumberland, PO Box 8812, Silver Springs, MD 20907)

LUNACHICKS – BINGE AND PURGE [CD]

Awright, dude... chicks, man. Eatin' lotsa gross vittles on the front cover, while still lookin' foxy in stuff from Liz Montgomery's wardrobe in *Bewitched*. Yeah. Poundin' tunes about being on the rag and worrying about being fat. So like, the Ramones are pushin' pension age and still singin' about what it's like to be a pud in high school, and isn't Alice Cooper a grandpa or something now? There's, like, this big hole in music for something disposable now that Kiss Noxema-wiped their makeup away, so why not the Chicks, man? You afraid of girls or what, dude? Fuck, I think my backward baseball cap is too tight on my head, uh. –S. Feemster (Safe House, PO Box 349, West Labanon, NH 03784)

LOIS – BUTTERFLY KISS [LP]

Lois Maffeo used to be in that band Courtney Love with Pat Maley, but this is her solo effort, so to speak. CL was all about sweetness and light and lighly strummed acoustic guitars, but Lois' lyrics were more battery acid than Pixie Stix, so not all was lost. *Butterfly Kiss* continues in a similar vein, but with a slightly cleaner production. If you're looking for waves of distortion or thrashy noise, look elsewhere; but if you dig primitive pop with a great grrrl voice, here it is. –Dave Ehrlich (K Records, PO Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98570) *(Writers, please take note: From now on we will have none of that grrrl shit, or womyn or womin for that matter. It's just something you'll have to get over.)*

THE MELVINS – JOE PRESTON, KING BUZZO, DALE CROVER SOLO RECORDS [CD]

First of all, for anyone who hasn't seen the packaging of these records, it's a direct bite from the Kiss solo albums. It's got to be one of the best ideas in a while, from the poster inside, to the autograph, to the painted pictures of their ugly mugs on the covers. Brilliant! The general consensus on the *music* is that these guys need each other, because each solo lacks what the others have to offer, which is what makes The Melvins so great. The best one though, by far, is the Joe Preston album. Mostly made of samples and one long 22 minute guitar drone that is not too far off the latest Melvins record. King Buzzo also stays true to The Melvins style: His record is much different from the music he creates with the rest of the band. Dale, well, let's just say on his solo record *he* misses *his* counterparts quite a bit more than his homeys. All in all, a great collectors item for Melvin's fans, but if you're new to them, get one of their other records first. –D. Gomez (Boner)

MINDSLAM [7"]

Typical dork punk with one exception: their singer has a rad voice like an on-key Exene. It's too bad she hooked up with these losers. "Whenever I Dream" should have been covered by someone else. –D. Gomez (PO Box 9961, Stanford, CA 94309)

MONSTER ZERO – WRECK [CD]

Wanna–be Seattle rock gods with boring riffs. It's getting old. –Evan (Sonic Bubblegum, 157 Murdock St. #3, Brighton, MA 92135)

MULE – I'M HELL/TO LOVE SOMEBODY [7"]

The rhythm section of the Laughing Hyenas form 2/3s of Mule and that is all well and good. However, without John's vocals, the attitude and punch is all but gone. "I'm Hell" is close to the intensity of L.H. But the flip, a Bee Gees cover, is a sorry waste of time. They

A viewer who skips the advertising is the moral equivalent of a shoplifter. -Nicholas Johnson fucked up by skipping out on John and Larissa. –Evan (1/4 Stick, PO Box 25342, Chicago, IL, 60625)

MULE – MULE [C]
Proof that even the best bassist and drummer in Detroit can't float a band with no songs. –Bob Lee (Touch & Go)

MUSLIMGAUZE – COUP D'ÉTAT/ABU NIDAL [CD]
With an exotic collection of moody, surreal soundscapes somewhere between LSD and opium, Muslimgauze create beautiful atmospheric melodies suitable for framing. Various percussive instruments are used, and lay a somewhat tribal feel to most of the tracks, though the keyboards and other instruments give the music a definite Middle Eastern slant (think Egypt). The tracks flow into one another and, as a result, the mood that's set is not broken until the end of the album. Dulcet rapture for your next trance. –Kerin (Soleilmoon)

Run Westy Run

MUZZA CHUNKA – LOADED [7"]
Two songs, "Loaded" and "Open House." One is pretty good, one sucks. The world does not need (or care) to hear about anything dealing with your dick. The Mentors have given us plenty of that. –Evan (Bong Load)

THE NIGHTBLOOMS [CD]
Half-male/half-female Dutch quartet that seems at first to be a pleasant yet forgettable Lush/My Bloody Valentine cross. Yet dig a little deeper and there's a pointed aggressiveness that Lush simply does not possess and that MBV bury beneath their beautiful sonic rushes. The best thing of all about the Nightblooms, though, would be the special creepiness they've patented with songs like "Butterfly Girl." Quite repetitive guitar phrases mixed with whispery vocal mantras – really sticks in the subconscious. Hope they head more toward this direction in the future. –Etienne Martinez (Seed Records, 19 W. 21st St., Ste. 501, NY, NY 10010)

PBK – MACROPHAGE THE TOIL AND THE REAP [CD]
This is like listening to the long lost works of a composer from some dead, machine-based society. A composer that didn't use violins and woodwinds, but rather old short wave radios, garbage disposals, plane sanders and scratched records. The works presented are both dirty and strangely beautiful, calm or violent with always an underlying sense of tension, kind of like the monster in the closet you knew was there, though no one else saw it. These are compositions that harken back to the original, more orthodox definition of "industrial" music; that is to say, music that is made up of elements and instrumentation not usually associated with traditional ideas of music. To limit this CD to one kind of audience would be a shame. Open the mind and let the "noise" flow in. –S. Feemster (ND, PO Box 4144, Austin, TX 78765)

PIGFACE – FOOK [CD]
For the uninformed, Pigface is the Live-Aid of the nineties without the charitable cause. In this incarnation of the super group, many of the musicians from the first album, *Gub*, have stayed along for the ride and have picked up a number of extremely talented hitchhikers. Fook is much more listener-friendly than *Gub* – medium instead of spicy. Although nothing on this album is as godlike as "Tapeworm", it is filled with many moments of brilliance. One of the strengths of this conglomeration of songwriters (including Martin Atkins, Chris Connelly, Mary Byker, En Esch, William Tucker, and Ogre among others) is their musical differences and their ability to combine these into a never before heard package. We're talking really weird, groovy shit that is never repetitive. The track "Hips, Tits, Lips, Power!" is a good example. A funky bass groove, computerized hand-claps, and solid drumming (Atkins is to be revered), alongside these two powerful female vocalists grunting and growling out the formula for success – "Hips, Tits, Lips, Power!" – over and over again. Or take the ego statement, "I Can Do No Wrong". Minimal, flat drumming and guitar work allow Chris Connelly to carry the song vocally, using his sensual, low-pitched singing to give the track depth. A truly great album is *Fook*. And a great sounding word as well. Fook. Fook. Fook. –Kerin (Invisible, PO Box 16008, Chicago, IL 60616)

THE PONTIAC BROTHERS – FUZZY LITTLE PIECE OF THE WORLD [CD]
I only listened to the first three songs and it was supremely evident that these guys have no plans to move beyond the bar-room rock of the Replacements. A dead ringer for Westerberg et. al. in every way. Guess life could be worse but it probably couldn't be this boring. –Evan (Frontier, PO Box 22 Sun Valley, CA 91353)

ROYAL TRUX – ROYAL TRUX [LP]
In a scene where most indie bands are injected with sameness and a lack of expression, the future looks lugubrious, with thousands of bands latent with the same virus. Like a few others (e.g., Sebadoh), Royal Trux sit on their own creative stool in the corner, wearing their dunce caps of cool, and don't give a shit. Neil Hagerty (from you know where) comands intoxicated guitars whose sound stumbles about the streets, yelling at the bystanders. This record plays like a fucked up bicycle rim. Swaying slowly with great peaks and troughs, but still managing to get to the right destination. The voices of both Neil and Jennifer Herrema, hang around like the discordant superstars that they are. From beginning to end, the songs evolve with the same pleasurable awkwardness, and leave you stunned. Pick this up after you get a new pair of Converse and you will be one happy chowee. –D. Chowee (Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647)

RUN WESTY RUN – PLOWED INTO GOD [7"]
Keeping up the indie rock status, while the ink is drying on their contract with A&M, this seven inch is prettty rockin'. The a-side has an up and down tempo that made me feel kinda car sick, but I enjoyed the ride. The b-side is all guitars in your face laden with catchy riffs, so step back. –Peter (Big Money Inc., PO Box 2483, Loop Station, Minneapolis, MN 55402)

SAVALAS – SLEEVED/ FIVE FINGERED [7"]
Straight up, well done Fugazi–core. I didn't check it out on the DC meter but I'm sure it would pass the test. Vocals sound exactly like Guy (just pretend the Rites of Spring re-formed). –Evan (Titanic, 850 22nd #6, Boulder, CO 80302)

SEVERIN – ACID TO ASHES, RUST TO DUST [LP]
These guys are on the right label for their kind of music. Their tight, wiry brand of post-punk blast-offs fit in very nicely with other bands on Dischord (one that starts with an "F" and ends with an "azi" springs immediately to mind). It pushes along pretty well, no huge surprises, though the rave-up/rave-down on "New #1" is pretty neato. I'm torn on this one. If I hadn't heard any "emo-core" or other bands on Dischord I might come at this better. They are good and their music has a good mix of mood and texture, it's just that the little man on my shoulder is telling me I've heard this done before. It's not exactly paint-by-numbers, more like connect the dots. –S. Feemster (Dischord)

SHINY BEAST – SHINY BEAST [CD]
Bass heavy noise recorded in North Carolina, and friends with the likes of Erectus Monotone and Polvo, although I wouldn't make any comparisons. As awkward as that nose whistle we used to get while sitting next to that cute girl in school. Take ultra heavy bass, slick drumming, guitars that sometimes resemble Jonestown or Porn Orchard with noisier distortion, distorted vocals, and a dip of Steel Pole and you have quite a listening experience, especially at high decibels. Shiny Beast throws you in a dumpster and laughs over you. I like four of the five songs. If it was on SubPop or AmRep, you'd already have this. –D. Chowee (Boner)

SHUDDER TO THINK – HIT LIQUOR/NO ROOM 9, KENTUCKY [7"]
With the addition of ex-Jawbox drummer Adam Wade, these guys have a lineup capable of achieving the promise of last year's brilliant *Get Your Goat*. Operatic vocalist Craig Wedren plays it subtle on "Hit Liquor" leaving the spotlight to the song's loping rhythms and pleasantly grating guitars. He steals the show, however, on "No Room 9, Kentucky," weaving a cryptic tale of incest and suicide over a fittingly surreal ballad backdrop. The best Dischord record you could possibly ingest hallucinogens to. Imagine that. –Etienne Martinez (Dischord)

SISTER PSYCHIC – FUEL [CD]
More raping of the Seattle sound. As labels continue to scrape the bottom of the barrel to find nirvana (no pun intended), Sister Psychic hits no uncharted water and sounds like an obvious corporate ladder climber. Someone should tell these clowns that they were born too late. –D. Gomez (Restless, 1616 Vista Del Mar Ave., Hollywood, CA 90028)

SMOG – FORGOTTEN FOUNDATION [CD]
22 strange cuts of varying low–tech brilliance. I've got no clue what Smog is all about except they (it, he,...) find pleasure in simple, scratchy, meandering ditties involving distorted guitars and vocals, and not involving even the smallest amount of produced stereo sound. There is something hypnotic in here... –Evan (Drag City)

SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS – SANTO! SINGS [7" EP]
S.C.O.T.S. plays some really tight music that is half Mariachi band and half Ventures. "Viva Del Santo" is a song about a Mexican wrestler/superhero with authentic south-of-the -border echo vocals. Nifty little concept. –Evan (Zontar, 197 East Clayton St., Athens, GA 30601)

ST. JOHNNY – GO TO SLEEP [7"]
Well, I could just be a smartass and say that this single achieved what its title suggested, but I won't. I'm sure these guys mean well, and their hearts are in the right places, but this does nothing for me. Typical "loud" guitars, Dinosauresque drumming, sounded better at 33 1/3 than 45, and the singer sounds like that dork from Flesh For Lulu. Supposedly, St. Johnny are signed to DGC now, after having been recommended by Thurston what'shisname. Oh well. –Dave Ehrlich (Ajax Records, PO Box 805293, Chicago, IL 60680)

STAR PIMP – STAR PIMP [CD]
More really good low frequency madness from Boner Records. It's a hit! Too bad this isn't the background music for the modern dance show on late night PBS or else I'd really be into it. Loud and slick bass, slick and female drumming, female and foxy singing, foxy and original guitars. I like "Virginia" and "Splooge". Play "Virginia" for your mom. It's pretty enough to make her wonder if you're a fuck up or not. Star Pimp is two boys and two girls that successfully create six aced-out San Francisco art noise songs that manage to poke you in the eyes six different ways. Some songs quickly pound the shit out of you, others make you "ooh" and "aah" at their clever harmonics and melodies, and still others make you put on a wig and disco. Go get it. –D. Chowee (Boner)

STEEL WOOL – IAN [7"]
Another piece of wax from the Northwest. The a-side builds slowly into a wall of guitars and then fades out. The b-side is more straight forward with an in-your-face punk rock song and an instrumental. Catchy, but nothing new. –Peter (Empty)

[The piano is] able to communicate the subtlest universal truths by means of wood, metal and vibrating air. –Kenneth Miller.

STRAWMAN – S/T [CD]
Tommy Strange, formerly of San Francisco's Swollen Boss Toad, fronts this new project of honest and intense hardcore. Of his many incarnations, this is actually the best project he has been a part of, with the whole band creating a solid mesh of music, experience and thought. What does that sound like? Like grafting the straight ahead playing of Chicago bands like Naked Raygun or Tar with the early '80s DC sound of Faith while maintainig a firm foothold in contemporary (re: '90s) issues and structure. On songs like "Sioux City Debutante" or "Democrat", simple stories of broken dreams, abuse and corruption are presented with a no-nonsense music accompaniment scarred with Strange's direct-hit vocals. This is not to say that Tommy is the centerpiece of this project because you get the feeling that all the members really mold this project into what it is. For a precise and measured picture of what hardcore can accomplish now, this is definitely worth it. –Tomás (Allied)

SUPERCHUNK – MOWER [EP]
Three new songs from Merge, Chapel Hill's finest. Hooks, backing vocals and powerchords – inimitably 'chunk. These are their first recordings with new drummer Jon Wurster. The last track, "Fishing," is a live track recorded in England. Speaks for itself. –Cliff (Merge, PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27574)

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES – CLOSER TO GOD [CD]
When this came out on Fire last year, I had little idea that it would eventually provide me with perhaps my favorite listening experience of that twelve month period. First impression is an appealing, often cutesy bastard marriage of Smiths, Pistols and Syd Barrett. But then things get progressively more disturbing and tons more compelling, as you realize that Daniel Treacy's 10-year-plus tenure as head TV Personality landed him in a nuthouse a few years back (where he reportedly wrote a good deal of this stuff). Knowing that, highlights shift from the abrasive "You Don't Know How Lucky You are" to the nursery rhyme dementia of "Razorblades and Lemonade" and "Goodnight Mr. Spaceman," not to mention the post-ECT niceties of "I Hope You Have a Nice Day," "You are Special and You Always Will Be" and "I Love You and Your Little Works of Art." If you can make it through the other 18 songs to the climax of the spectacular title track, you will have achieved a higher state, though I don't know if God has anything to do with that. –Etienne Martinez (Seed)

TERROR AGAINST TERROR – PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS [CD]
Cyber-revolutionists are what Terror Against Terror seem to be, assaulting your ears with their brand of techindusdanse. Open up the liner notes, and you'll find a suggested reading list that makes *The Anarchist Cookbook* look like a kiddie's storybook. This is a premeditated plan of attack that might catch some off guard (where did this band come from anyway?), but when your ears are subjected to the heavy drum patterns, the gunshot loops, the incessant throbbing of computerized bass, and the distorted vocals, you will enlist in their growing army of fans. This is talent barely tapped; a band ready to send you into complete sensory overload. "This is total war. We have your hearts and minds." Words from the next leaders of the cyberpunk movement. –Kerin (Dark Vinyl Records, Kettelerstr. 4, D-8595 Waldsassen, Germany)

THATCHER ON ACID [7"]
Very driving, up-tempo guitar oriented, pop punk on the first two cuts: "26 Letters" and "Grindstone Cowboy". The latter seems to be the weak point of this 7", because it seems like dated early '80s p-rock, but I guess the cool, existential lyrics carry the weight instead. The third track is brilliant, spacious, breathing guitar work which gradually builds into a mild orgasm, with beautiful howling backing vocals. I'm not sure what they're singing about on this one, but I get the point nonetheless. –Cliff (K)

THEATRE OF ICE – LIFE IS A SCARY AND WONDERFUL THING [CD]
With that title, I was expecting funny. But this CD isn't funny, at least not intentionally. It's... well, it's very New Wave, in the worst way. Like MTV in 1983 New Wave: synth-wind noises through the whole thing. They even have the nerve to change the title/lyric in their cover of "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" to "In the Garden of Evil". Why would you even try to improve on a title like "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida"? –Bob Lee (Orphanage Records, 1702 West Camelback Road, Ste 315, Phoenix, AZ 85015)

THREE MILE PILOT – NA VUCCA DO LUPU [CD]
It sounds just like The Replacements. I've made an amazing discovery, I deserve a huge bonus. Send the check to *Ben Is Dead*. –Evan (Cargo, PO Box 9055, La Jolla, CA 90238)

THROW – ALL TOO HUMAN [7"]
When I first listened to this 7", I thought it was pretty good. But after a couple of listens, it fell into the mediocre category. The songs are upbeat pop with a heavy bass, kind of like a cross between Buffalo Tom and something from Berkeley. There is some promise to be found here. –Peter (Limited Potential Records, PO Box 268586, Chicago, IL 60626)

TRENCHMOUTH – CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ACTION! VOLUME ONE: FIRST THERE WAS MOVEMENT [LP]
I see the best intentions of youthful expression gone awry in this overly blown-out presentation. The rock music presented on this work is a stew pot of jazz and reggae stock simmering with a hardcore base. Socially conscious lyrics are presented in an all too familiar and self conscious manner as if Trenchmouth were some straight-edge kids who grew their hair out a bit and began listening to Coltrane and Nation Of Ulysses. Bands like Ulysses, Fugazi and Downcast do come to mind while listening to *Construction* but in a context of how much more I dig those groups by comparison. The bass and drums are more noticeable in their mix, doing lots of funky-jazzy rhythm changes with the guitar taking a back seat and vocals punching out in a very "look we're really trying to say something" way. Sense of humor? No time for it here, we're too busy creating a "revolution". Bongos are played. You could say this is a passionate effort that is unfortunately not backed up by very memorable music. –Tomás (Skene)

TUBAL CAIN – 25 ASSORTED NEEDLES [CD]
A good dose of loud guitars brought me out of my synthesizer-induced stupor, and I was happy to find they belonged to Tubal Cain, a band that produces old fashioned rock n' roll. With the exceptions of their opening track, which sounded like a horrific Laibach anthem, and a sampled/synthed song called "Overseer", the album is crammed full of guitars – sometimes a little too much. Some of the songs border on metallish, and would be a total loss if it weren't for the vocalist, whose voice sounds like a roaring lion – extremely powerful. I'd like to see these guys lose 40% of the geetar solos, add a little more bass, and get the singer really pissed before they record. Now THAT would be a great thing to hear! – Kerin (Verdugo, 1530 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19102)

TUMBLEWEED – STONED/HOLY MOSES [7"]
Yep, they are really stoned to directly rip-off a Stooges riff and base a song on it. They wouldn't be all that bad if they could convince me that the ideas were their own. Why are Australians so hell bent on reliving the Stooges anyway? –Evan (Seed)

TUMBLEWEED – WEEDSEED [CD]
Weird, weird, weird. The artwork on the cover and inside of this album is totally '60s psychedelic, but the music is like a combination of '70s rock (Aerosmith) with a dash of grunge. The singer sounds like Michael Stipe on "Carousel" and then... it's kind of a loss to describe. Not bad, but not very good either. The instrumentals are the strength of this band. Tight rhythm section, nice distortion going on the guitars, lots of cymbals. Lyrically, the band sucks. Example? "Holy Moses man/Do the best you can/Holy Moses man/Do the best you can". Not enough here to pay attention to. –Kerin (Seed)

TWERDOCLEB – THE GNAT EP [7"]
This record strikes me as being of the self-indulgent kind, allowing Keith Parry (the driving force behind Vancouver's Superconducter) to basically get down and jam with his buddies, turning out some good, clean noise. The record is a mix of instrumentals and pounding songs with screaming vocals. Cool guest vocals by Nardwuar the Human Serviette. Don't over analyze, just enjoy it. –Peter (Scratch, 317A Cambie Street, Vancouver, BC. Canada V6B2N4)

SANTO!
Music by SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS

UPROTOR – TECHNOCRACY NOW [CD]
52 minutes of the most nerve wracking, psychosis instilling, droning techno you've ever heard. It's great! Uprotor creates this wall of computer noise that just digs a hole right into your skull. It's not the volume of the music that's impressive, it's the band's skillful manipulation of sound that's awe inspiring. This music could drive you to kill, man. –Kerin (Gymnastic, BCM Box 3673, London, WC1N3XX, England)

VELOCITY GIRL – COPACETIC [CD]
I don't know about you, but 1986 was my year of pop orgasms. Talulah Gosh, Shop Assistants, Soup Dragons, Close Lobsters, McCarthy, The Wolfhounds and other U.K. groups found themselves tagged as "shambling" bands – all possessing speedy little guitar melodies, adorable haircuts and oversized anoraks in their wardrobes. Well, the N.M.E. (no surprise here) eventually turned on their once beloved discoveries, and most of these bands vanished. Then, a couple of years ago, oddly enough, scores of East Coast kids started churning out '86ish pop nuggets – U.S. indie labels like Audrey's Diary, Slumberland and Spin Art have all spawned cute post-adolescents with anglophile sensibilities (thank god)... '86 lives again.

Velocity Girl's early 45's reeked of buoyant harmonies, gorgeously distorted guitars, and buoyant harmonies, and effortlessly adorable vocals. Their debut LP *Copacetic*, however, may come as a surprise to many. While the sparkling freshness is still inherent, VG have (it seems) made a strong effort to avoid 12 disposable tunes, the textures here are darker, varied, and the band seems to have... (gulp)... matured. So why knock them?

All television is educational television. The question is what is it teaching? –Nicholas Johnson

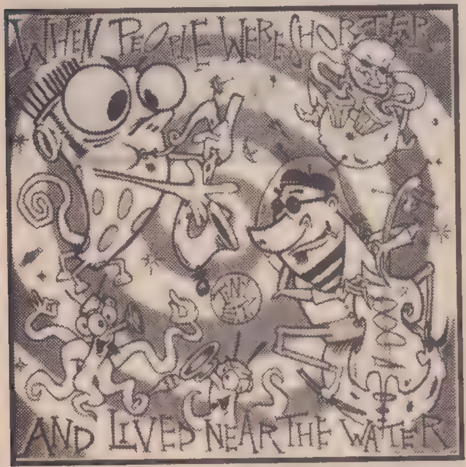
Copacetic is an impressive debut, and VG should be given credit for not just rehashing what they've done before; but it seems that this maturity has been gained at the expense of some of the immediacy the band once had. –Dave Ehrlich (SubPop)

VELOCITY GIRL

VENUS ENVY [7"]
Somewhere along the line, the term "alternative" got mixed up with "underground" which to most means "undiscovered". This lackluster rock band is a perfect example. Why they send this wannabe, big label shit to me is beyond me. You are not my ally even though we might be in the same place, "unknown"; let's not pretend we like each other. –D. Gomez (Red Planet, 2351 Sawtelle Blvd. #49, Los Angeles, CA 90064)

VERSUS [7"]
Straight forward pop songs with an emphasis on guitars and vocals. It's catchy and sounds like ____________ (insert favorite pop band here). –Peter (Pop Narcotic, 1085 Commonwealth Ave. #339, Boston, MA 02215)

WCKR SPGT – FORTUNE CAME TODAY [7"]
Definitely a tribal feel here, with heavy drums dominating. The vocals bugged the shit out of me and the lyrics were pretty lame. There is a token social commentary song done acoustically that is OK but it's not enough to save the entire record. It left me craving for less. –Peter (Jupa, PO Box 1243, Upland, CA 91785-1243)



WHEN PEOPLE WERE SHORTER AND LIVED CLOSER TO THE WATER – TINY [7"]
When I first spun this 7" at Rump's quaint home, Darby and Kerin had the "What the fuck?!" look. I agree and that's why I love this record. Aside from the fact that only an elite 1,000 will get the chance to own this, or that it's a magnificent recording by Kramer, or that they "interpret" a song made popular by Englebert Humperdink and Lawrence Welk ("Quadra, Quadra, Quadra"), WPWS+LCTTW are a metamorphosis of King Missile and others, complete with tenor sax, raving synths, bongos, guitars and drums, probably lots more. Check out the cover art by Kozik. It says it all, and while you're at it, lay down some $ for this record. Broaden your mind. –D. Chowee (Staple Gun, PO Box. 867262, Plano, TX 75086-7262)

WILL – WORD•FLESH•STONE [CD]
Rhys Fulber commands the helm of this Frontline Assembly spin-off – the second album for this band. Although the structuring of the music retains the FLA signature complexity, it is, at times, a little too complex, too contrived. The music is very medieval, reminiscent of Controlled Bleeding's similar period, and has a grating quality to it. Maybe it's all the angelic choir loops? Fulber sings on a couple of the tracks too, and it's a good thing he's such a wizard with synthesizers, because singing is *not* what this man does best. Compared to his previous work, this album was a huge disappointment. Fulber is spreading himself too thin and the result is obvious. –Kerin (Third Mind)

WOOL – S.O.S./RUN-HIDE [7"]
The Stahl Bros. and crew have established themselves firmly into the medium tempo rock club (along with hundreds of other aging punkers) and continue to riff away towards some sort of…stardom?…contract? Yeah, okay, I'll stop whining 'cause they are really good live and I was sorta into S.O.S. until the needle got stuck in a repetitive chant (maybe it was intentional). "Run/Hide" reminded me of Soundgarden which is not bonus points in my book. –Evan (Bong Load)

COMPS, SPLITS, JADED STAFF MEMBER COMBINING THREE BANDS IN ONE REVIEW

AVOCADO JUNGLE FUZZ/WAG – PHINEAS P. CAGE [7"]
At first glance I was hopeful. Shit, they spent all this money to do a 3-D cover and provide glasses! Don't be fooled, it is mediocre music that barely deserves this review. Next time, better bands could make the packaging fly. –Evan (Happy Trails, PO. Box 5467, Evanston, IL 60204-5267)

THE BOLLWEEVILS – LOST AND FOUND/ABOUT YOU [7"]
SAMIAM – BILLY [LP]
SCHLONG/FALSE SACRAMENT [10"]
I'm jaded and definitely not inspired by any of these releases. The immediate response is "If I hear another sorry pop song, someone will die." Boring, boring, boring. The Bollweevils at least had cool colored vinyl. –Evan (The Bollweevils: Go Deaf, 2327 75th Court, Elmwood Park, IL 60635. Samlam: New Red Archives, 6520 Selma Ave. Suite 1305, Hollywood, CA 90026. Schlong/False Sacrament: Very Small)

GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL/SIX FINGER SATELLITE [DOUBLE 7"]
First of all, just the artwork on this is worth the money. On the first 7", Boston's newest rising stars, Six Finger Satellite, serve up a Prozac-induced pop tune called "Sex Transistor" which is both snappy and danceable in a Rock Lobster sort of way. The second track, "Cripple Monster Bearing Malice" is a demented, jerking, riff driven number replete with squeaking horns. Intergalactic pop? I thought they were from Beantown, but now I'm not sure if they're even from this galaxy. I wonder if they know Ziggy. "Twelve Gauge" is up first, and aside from a short and to the point style, it showcases some great bass playing especially on the bridges, which is really responsible for making this track move. Next is "Don't Cry" which is strung along by a nice, loose, in the pocket groove interpolated with some dynamic eruptions of wall of guitar stuff. Texture wise, this is bitchen' (was there a flute buried in there somewhere?). Overall, a really nice song. If you're sonically adventurous, this is for you. –Cliff (SubPop)

LEGENDARY LUNCH/KINGS OF FEEDBACK [7"]
LL delivers a straight ahead punk rock song with a dose of feedback. The KOF track, "I Don't Give A Bleep", is a droning combo of noise and answering machine/radio samples with all the f-words censored. I think it's a statement on censorship and I kinda liked it. –Evan (Ratfish/Immortal, PO Box 1869, Cambridge, MA 02238)

NAR/LIZARDS [12"]
The Nar side is straight-forward, three chord pop punk from Northern California (i.e., Sacramento). It has some catchy numbers on it, especially "The Longest Mile", taken from an ABC After School Special, however it does drag towards the end. Not bad for a first effort, keep at it. The Lizards' side, on the other hand, totally bugs. The vocals are lame and the songs are uninteresting. What more can I say. The record as a whole is good for a couple of listens, but not something I'd want to be stuck on a deserted island with. –Peter (Very Small, PO Box 8223, Emeryville, CA 94662)

TRENCHMOUTH/CIRCUS LUPUS [7"]
Oooh neato. A picture disc. A joy for the eye; now let's get to the toons. The Trenchmouth song "Sea of Eternity" sounds like some punk rock kids that watched too many re-runs of *Dobie Gillis* and, in tribute to Maynard G. Krebs, thought they would stick some goofy flute noodlings and some frantic bongo drums in with a swingin' p-rock tune. Guess what? It works! Bob Denver would be proud, Daddy-O. While listening to the Circus Lupus side, "Heathen" barreling along like a late '70s Ford Ranger, I thought, "Hey, this sounds like an old '70s punk song." Lo and behold, it is. The Kirk Brandon who's credited must be the guy who was in Theater of Hate. (Remember them? Anyone?) Well done and fun, and any band that has a bass player named Seth Instawhip can't be halfway bad. –S. Feemster (Skene! & Dischord)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – BELOW SAN ONOFRE [CD]
Packaged neatly in a jewelbox, *Below San Onofre* is a showcase for artists from San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico. The liner notes are replaced by a booklet containing Spanish and English poetry as well as artwork from some very talented people. The CD, though, is where the gems are at. Undiscovered talent abounds here, from the Skinny Puppyish Artefakto, to the trance techno beat of Bostich, both bands hailing from the seedy bowels of TJ. On this side of the border, Pain Emission cranks out their heavy duty techno with true gusto, as does Retro Tech, combining elements of modern technology with Spanish ballads of yesteryear to produce the Cybersalsa sound made famous by Aye Mamacita. It's quite possible that the opening up of the border will bring us more than just a flood of immigrants. It could also bring a wave of new industrial/techno geniuses to admire. –Kerin (Pan Handler Production, PO Box 948571, La Jolla, CA 92037-9402)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – DISCLOSURE: VOICES OF WOMEN [CD]
This is a collection of 32 female poets/writers/speakers that seem, in most cases, to be from Southern California. This reminds me, as a man, of sitting at a party when I was in high school (was it?), maybe a room away from where some of my friends who were girls-into-women were talking like there wasn't a boy in the next room. They weren't talking about boys like we in the boys' locker room liked to kid ourselves. They were talking about their feelings and complaining and discussing and laughing and crying, all without the glass wall of pride

or aggression or fear that usually separated me from my male friends. That's how this compilation feels, and because it made me feel, it connected. –S. Feemster, sensitive male (New Alliance, PO Box 1389, Lawndale, CA 90260)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – FREEDOM OF CHOICE [CD]
You thought the '80s New Wave scene was over? Guess again! Tannis Root and those geeks (cute ones) at Caroline have managed to create a cover album of nu-wave greats performed by the likes of Sonic Youth, Mudhoney, Red Kross, Chia Pet, and Polvo, among others. All proceeds from this album go towards Planned Parenthood, so you get a chance to listen to your favorite now bands mutilate your favorite then songs while a pro-choice establishment benefits. How much more excitement could you take? How about Thurston Moore's gallant effort to get all the words right to Plastic Bertrand's "Ca Plane Pour Moi"? (definitely the best track on the album) Or what about *Sassy*'s Christina Kelly reciting the words to "Don't You Want Me Baby" (Shangri-La's style) while (ex)editor Jane Pratt plays violin in the background? As an added bonus, you'll hear Wall Of Voodoo's "Mexican Radio" taken apart and brutally butchered by Polvo (this is starting to sound too much like a K-Tel commercial). This album should be bought for the cause and nostalgia alone. Most of the covers are either dangerously annoying or just plain suck, but there's enough good (and amusing) moments on this to make it worthwhile. –Kerin (Caroline Records, 114 W. 26th St., NY, NY 10001)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – GROIN THUNDER [CD]
A Troggs covers album and, like most tribute albums, it suffers from the same problems. Too much mediocrity. 24 songs by 24 bands and 72 minutes of an all-star garage compilation. Some of my favorite tracks are from The Original Sins, The Mummies, Thee Headcoats, and The Groovie Ghoulies. Too bad The Gories weren't on it though. Nothing terribly outstanding besides some pretty nifty art work by Peter Bagge. –D. Chowee (Dog Meat, GPO Box 2366V, Melbourne 3001 Australia)

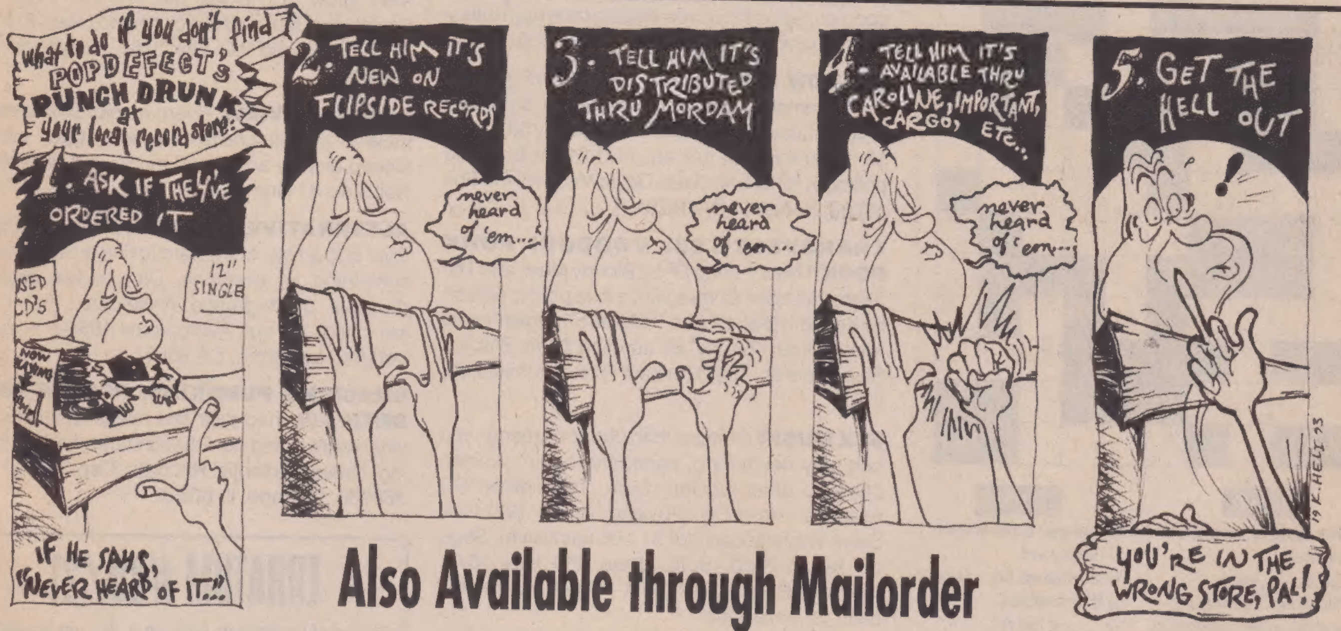
VARIOUS ARTISTS – SON OF BLLLEEEEAAAUUU-RRRRGGHHH! [7"]
This is the second record like this from Slap A Ham. 52 bands, 69 songs, 15 countries, 16 minutes and all on a 45. All the lyrics are inaudible and the average song length is 15 seconds. Definitely a painful audio experience, but also, at the same time, enjoyable. Listen to it stoned, it lasts longer. –Peter (Slap A Ham, PO Box 420843, San Francisco, CA 94142-0843)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – SURPRISE YOUR PIG: A TRIBUTE TO R.E.M. [CD]
I hadn't heard half these tunes in the original, so you could say I'm the perfect guinea pig for this one. And yes, it surprised me! I didn't know R.E.M. wrote so many lovely tunes. Samson & the Philistines sings "Talk About the Passion" in Italian , Greek, or Spanish (I forget which one), making it even more drippy-passionate than the original. Just Say No does a great version of "Radio Free Europe", with slurred lyrics hiding between two jackknifed guitars. Steel Pole Bathtub stands out with the weirdest cut: an aerie fantasy built upon a repeating sample of billiard balls clacking on a pool table. Some tracks rely more on the strength of the original and don't really offer a new slant other than merely carpeting it over with noise. Overall though, the album injects some vitality into the originals. You don't have to be a fan of R.E.M. to enjoy this. –Don Lewis (Staplegun)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – TALES FROM ESTRUS VOL. 2 [7"]
Number two from the Tales series. This one features all Japanese garage rock bands (and you thought they just did noise) doing straight forward American '60s style garage punk. Supersnazz and American Soul Spiders appear on the first side, and its pretty smokin'. However, side two with Jackie and The Cedrics and The Beyond, drags a bit, making you want to turn the record over and listen to the first side again, to justify the money you spent. It does come with a cool comic book/cover done by Jowsph Newton. Give it a look-see. –Peter (Estrus)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – TARANTISTIC SEED PLOT OF A WORLD TO COME [7"]
This is a compilation 7" on a new label out of Portland called Road Cone. Good things will come, judging from it. Daniel Menche's contribution is a structured "noise" piece that draws you in, followed by Loren Mazzacane's beautiful solo guitar song "Night Through" and then the final song on side one, "Junket's Flounder", a song that swallows up easy and majestic in one mouthful. Bugskull's Melodic freakout "Lewis" gets side two flowing. Continuing on, Hazel huggs the curves, zooming along at 80 with "Shag Rug". Ending with blues lament by-way-of-the-Inland-Empire of Refrigerator's "Fan Club Information". Pretty neato stuff. –S. Feemster (Road Cone, PO Box 8732, Portland, OR 97207-8732)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – THROW: THE YO-YO STUDIO COMPILATION [LP]
Yo-Yo, the studio where Beat Happening recorded their first single for the internationally acclaimed International Pop Underground series. Need you know more? If not for the excellent studio recordings by Kicking Giant, Bikini Kill, Gravel, Mecca Normal, Some Velvet Sidewalk, Courtney Love (the band), Superchunk, and a really hip track by Cannanes, buy this record for the history and legacy backing it. Also, eight of the sixteen bands don't use bass, just like Beat Happening. That's cool. A solid mix of all sorts of styles. They play acute songs, obtuse songs and even right angle songs. A whole Pythagorean mix of K-esque, Olympian bands who are probably the hippest cats in any cafe. I would trade one of my Tonka Trucks for this any day. On lollipop green vinyl. –D. Chowee (Yo-Yo Recordings, PO Box 10881, Olympia, WA 98502)



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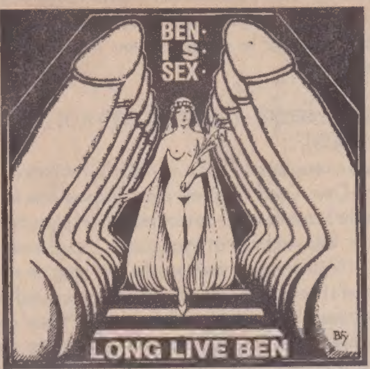

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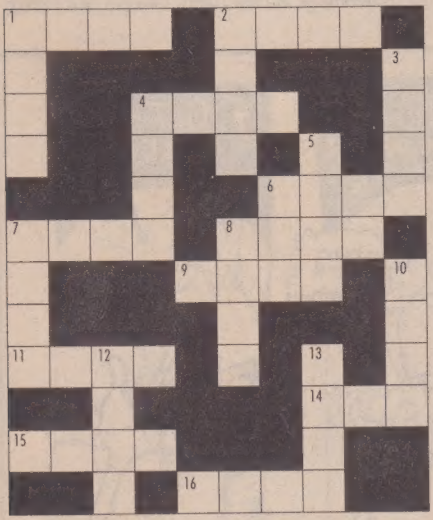

down

1) Their legs are considered quite a dish in France
2) Toad of _____ Hall
3) You get warts if you touch one
4) Insulting term directed towards the Belgians
5) Low on the evolutionary scale
6) Small green amphibious reptile... minus the last letter
7) Nerdish character from "American Graffiti"
8) You'd beat them in a game of tennis
10) A Tadpole when it grows to adulthood
12) Like a mushroom, it's a _____stool
13) 15th president of the U.S.

across

1) Small green amphibian reptile
2) Lives in a pond
4) Jumps and eats flies, we hear
6) Rhythms with road
7) _____ of Toad Hall
8) Similar to frog
9) DOAT (anagram)
11) You wouldn't want your doughter to marry one (backwards)
14) Small green amphibious reptile with first letter missing
15) It'll go squash if you run over it in a car
16) Its webbed feet are an advantage

(answers will appear in our following issue. Good luck!)

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ERRATUM #20/21

Photos of Duchess de Sade on p. 38, and Shannon Selberg on p. 68 are by Don Lewis.

In the interview with Joe Zinatto on Erotica pg 15, it should have read Marquis Von Bayros instead of Baron Von Beirose, and Felicien Rops instead of Elisha Rocks. Transcribers on drugs type faster, not better. Got a lot of those serious collectors scrambling – sorry.

Drawing on pg. 48, "Bible Shenanigans", was done by Perry Holguin.

There is nothing personal about a personal ad. - Wes Smith

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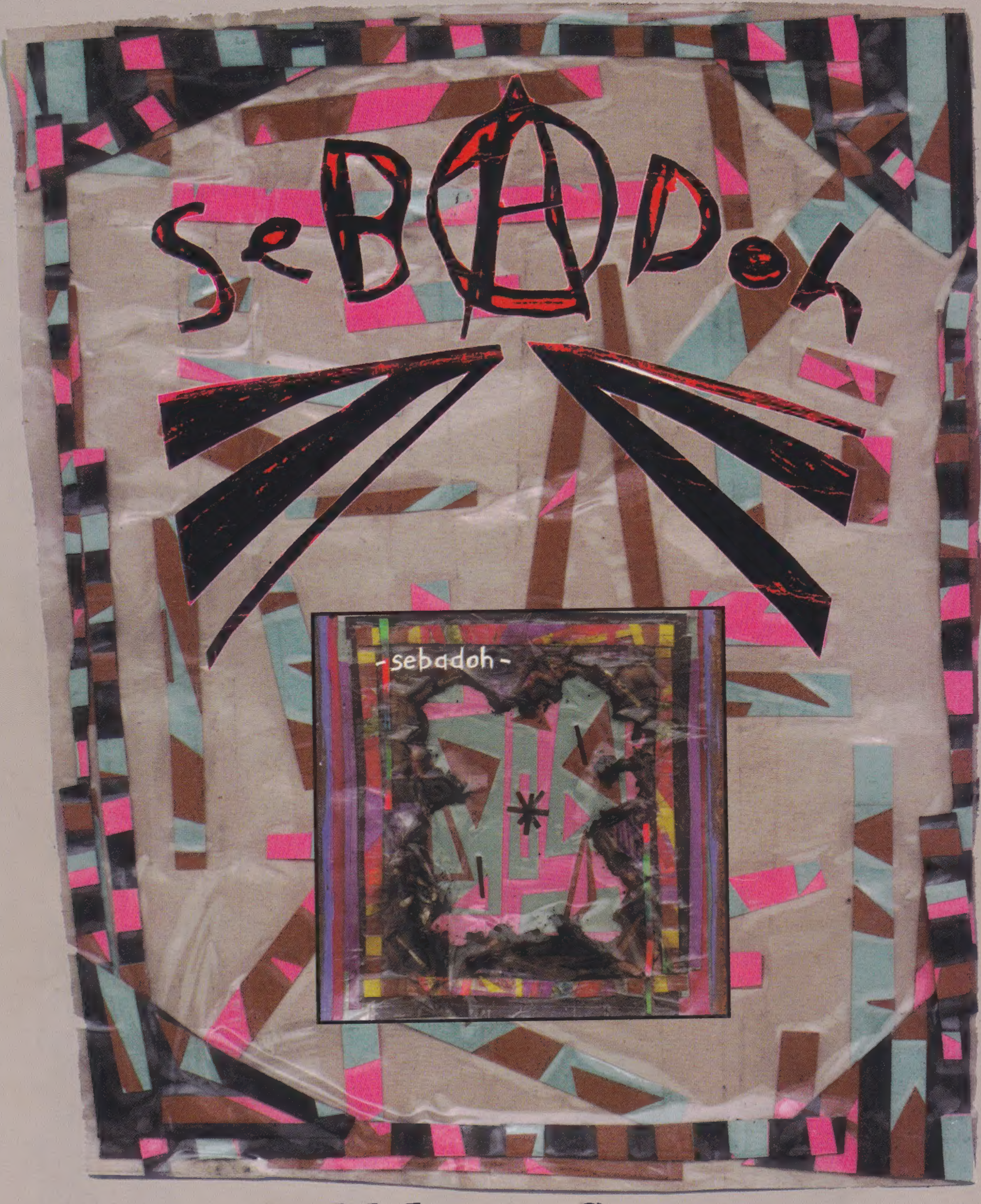

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